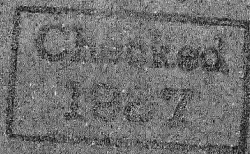


SHORT STORIES

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MASTI VENKATESA IYENGAR



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SHORT STORIES

In Four Volumes

MASTI VENKATESA IYENGAR

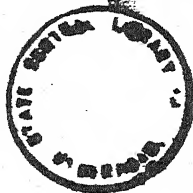
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With a Foreword by

SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHAR

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The following notes may be of use to readers who are not familiar with the Kannada country.

Gadi: The ruler's seat; throne if the ruler is fairly important. *Chunam*: Lime. Giving chunam for chewing betel leaf and nut is a friendly act like, for example, lighting a cigarette for a smoker. *Kindiri*: A stringed musical instrument of small size carried about by wandering minstrels and thrummed to accompany their recitations. *Ragi*: A black or dark red grain of small size, the staple food of the country. *Vihara*: A Buddhist monastery.

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THE QUEEN OF NIJAGAL



Two hundred years ago there was in this country a large number of principalities. One of them had formed round Nijagal. In those days the Mahrattas used to come in expeditions against Mysore from time to time and Nijagal lay on the way from Maharashtra to Bangalore. A Paleygar of Nijagal, on such occasions, had to pay them some tribute and send a small troop with them for assistance. If he did not choose to do this, he had to say that he was a feudatory of the King of Mysore or of the chieftain of Bangalore and fight with the invader. In the condition in which the country then was, the Paleygar of Nijagal could choose either course according to his liking.

Among the Paleygars of the period in Nijagal, Ramarasa Nayak became famous. He had ascended the *gadi* after his father Timmarasa Nayak. He was about twenty-five years old when he became Paleygar. Very soon he became known as a good chieftain. He did not go beyond the fifty villages which he considered as part of his principality to raise moneys. Even in the fifty villages which he considered as forming his principality, he would raise only so much as was customary. In return for his levies he ensured to

those villages security from raids and maraudings of the common sort. If a large army came, he was not responsible for protecting the villages. As a matter of fact, the villages themselves did not expect such protection from him on such occasions. The Nayak, out of the money thus fairly raised from the villages, normally sent some amount by way of tribute to the Kings of Mysore, on demand, and treated himself as a feudatory of these Kings.

Ramarasa Nayak had two wives : Lakumavve and Girijavve. Ramarasa married Lakumavve a little before he ascended the *gadi*. Ten years passed but they had no children. In those days, and particularly in the households of such chieftains, there was little hope of a lineage continuing if a man of such years had not a son some years old. Ramarasa, besides, had no brothers. As he got no sons the Nayak sometimes wondered whether his principality would end with him. Hoping to get a son by the grace of God, he got more wells dug and more groves planted and more rest-houses built than would be ordinarily done by such a chieftain. He improved the temple of Sri Rama in the town of Nijagal and arranged for services being conducted regularly. Yet he got no children. Anxious like the chieftain

himself regarding the continuance of the lineage, the leaders of the people approached the Paleygar once and begged him on behalf of the population of the principality to take a son in adoption. Ramarasa did not agree. Lakumavve saw this and as the simplest way of giving him a successor decided to bring her husband another wife. With this view she selected Girijavve from among her relations and brought her to the palace and kept her there for about three years and made the chieftain see her several times. She then made him a request that he should marry Girijavve. Ramarasa at first refused, whether for courtesy or seriously, it would be hard to tell. Lakumavve said: "I have served you for fifteen years. You have loved me as you would a pet parrot. I have not helped to continue your line. That privilege has been denied me. But because I am barren, should the lineage end? Pray marry this young woman. If she bears a son, the lineage will be saved." The Nayak said: "What will you do if she should neglect you and ill-treat you?" Lakumavve said in reply: "It is a girl brought up by me. How can she ill-treat me? She will take the food I give and conduct herself as I tell her. Pray do not feel anxious for me." Ramarasa agreed and married Girijavve.

Girijavve was very beautiful; and as good as she was beautiful. From the day she became younger queen, she made herself, as it were, an attendant on the Nayak and on the elder queen. She did not, as the chieftain had feared, treat Lakumavve with indifference. Her relatives wished to have the elder queen put on the shelf and tried to persuade Girijavve to do this. But Girijavve said: "This home is hers. Being in it and owning it, she brought me into it; the half that she has given is mine. Even that is a debt which I shall have to clear. If I grab the other half that is still hers, shall I not be piling up sin? By God's grace I am a queen in this life. If I do evil now, I might be born a slave in the next life."

As Girijavve conducted herself with this discretion the home of the chieftain became a place of happiness. Lakumavve herself was delighted to find the younger queen so good. She had spoken with courage before the marriage took place, but had entertained some little fear within herself about how the younger woman might behave when her position became secure. When during a whole year after the marriage she saw Girijavve conduct herself with so much consideration, she felt proud that the thing she had done

had turned out so well. She treated the younger queen as a daughter, gave her apparel and jewellery, and did all in her power to make Ramarasa's second spell of married life happy. She gave her own mind to worship and vow and ritual and sought solace in God.

Though the understanding between the Nayak and his two wives was thus good, things in the palace were not as peaceful as before. Girijavve had been alone in the palace till she became queen, but after her marriage a younger brother of hers and her mother came and stayed with her. It was this mother who had tried to persuade her to treat Lakumavve badly. When the daughter did not accept her suggestion, this mother began to lower the elder queen's prestige in the palace by saying spiteful things about her to other people. Lakumavve was aware of what this woman was doing, but by innate goodness she was as a mother to all around her; so she did not heed what the younger queen's mother said or did, and hoped that things would improve. Girijavve's younger brother had been a loafer in the village of his birth; coming to his sister's palace and feeding sumptuously and in comfort, he grew up to be mischievous. As brother-in-law to the chieftain his facilities for mischief were

greater than ordinary. Once or twice there were words in the palace on complaints from the townspeople that the young man was consorting with the mischief-mongers of the place and had behaved improperly to some respectable young women. The chieftain and the elder queen were not persons to allow interference with the life of the populace. Kasturi Nayak, therefore, on these occasions got rebuked. The conduct of her mother and brother made the younger queen wonder if she might not send them back to their home, but, unwilling that they should return to the mean life of a village when she herself was living in the comfort of a palace, she put up with them and let them stay on.

The second year after marriage Girijavve bore a son. The chieftain and the elder queen were delighted and the townspeople rejoiced. In all the temples in the chieftaincy there was special worship and the whole population felt relieved that the Paleygar's lineage would continue.

In the course of the year of this son's birth the Mahrattas came in an expedition under the leadership of Sadasiva Rao. This was the third time they came after the Nayak ascended the *gadi*. On the first occasion the Nayak told them that he was a feudatory of the King of

Mysore and that if the Mahrattas would subdue Mysore he would become their feudatory, and would pay to them the tribute he was now paying to Mysore. The Mahrattas did not agree and waited outside the fort and tried to trouble the people of the villages. As usual on such occasions, those people left their homes and went into the woods. This was not what the Mahrattas wanted: they gained nothing by driving the people to the woods. Their desire was to make Ramarasa come out of his fort. He, however, stayed within and left them to do what they liked. The fort itself was impregnable and this was what made Ramarasa so firm. The invading army could not on that occasion stay long at that place. It waited for five days to see if the chieftain would become more reasonable and, as he held on, it left Nijagal and moved to other principalities which might be more easily persuaded to yield. Ramarasa thus got off easily on that occasion. When the Mahrattas came the second time the Paleygar sent word to fellow chieftains in the country round and made small troops belonging to them gather together at some distance from the camping ground of the Mahrattas and spread the rumour that that was an army from Mysore stationed there to deal with the

invaders and that very soon a larger army would come to its assistance. The Mahrattas desired somehow to get into Nijagal which was so good a fort and make use of it in further expeditions. They tried therefore to get the gates opened by intrigue. The people, however, were thoroughly loyal to Ramarasa and the time of the invader was wasted. At the end of some ten days the Mahratta commander received orders from his superior, who had gone a little further with the main army, to come and join him. On this occasion also the invading troops had to move forward without doing any harm to Nijagal.

As on those two occasions the Paleygar had stayed within the fort from fear, the invading troop came in smaller numbers on this occasion. The previous occasions had given some experience to Ramarasa also. He had arranged with the neighbouring chieftains for help and, if the invaders' numbers permitted, he had decided to lead his men against them in a sally. As it happened the smaller numbers of the enemy permitted of this plan being executed. When for three days friendly words had no effect, the Paleygar, on the fourth morning, fell upon the invading troops at an early hour and before they knew what was happening scattered them. The

invaders had not expected an attack and, taken by surprise, left the place empty-handed and feeling disgraced.

Shortly after this victory came the birthday of the chieftain's son. The populace was happy with the victory over the Mahrattas. With that came the joy of the heir-apparent's birthday. The enthusiasm of the townspeople knew no bounds. There was procession after procession in the temple and for a number of days brahmins and destitute people got free feeding. There were, besides, a number of singing parties. The more important of the processions were conducted at the expense of the palace. Ramarasa Nayak stood in the gatherings before the deity, humble and devout. When persons of position and fortune act in this way they win the affection and respect of the people. Ramarasa by his conduct became rooted in the affections of his people, more firmly than ever.

When festivity of this kind takes place in a town it is not merely the good things of life that receive encouragement. Along with the good people the bad ones also take part in festivity. In the celebrations on this occasion in Nijagal, the small and big mischief-mongers of the town gathered and had their own fun. Kasturi Nayak,

brother-in-law of the chieftain, was the leader of this lot. They gathered together and kept up their orgies of pleasure until late in the night, drinking and playing and acting as the spirit prompted them, for full three days. Ramarasa Nayak heard of this and spoke to his wife and asked her to advise her brother to be more sensible. Girijavve did this. Kasturi Nayak was very vexed. "How does it matter to you if I have some fun?" he said. That night the company consumed more liquor than usual. Kasturi got his share of the extra and lost his head. In the crowd around a procession of the deity, he and a companion of his misbehaved to the lady of some household. The people were unable to put up with it, and came in deputation to the chieftain and told him that the honour of their households was not safe because of the conduct of his brother-in-law. The next morning Ramarasa Nayak had Kasturi brought to the court and held an enquiry with a *panchayat*. On finding that the young man had been guilty of misconduct, he rebuked him in the presence of all and told him that he should not repeat such conduct, and that, if he did, he would be more severely punished. He also told his younger queen that her brother's ways were damaging his position with his people.

Girijavve had even before this thought of sending her brother away to his own place. On the Nayak speaking to her on this occasion she proposed to carry out that intention. The elder queen interfered. "Kasturi is no doubt at fault. But he is young. He has been advised to be careful. We have merely to see that he does not repeat such misconduct hereafter. That will make him all right." The younger queen had to accept this view.

Rebuke administered before a gathering greatly incensed Kasturi. He did not pause to think of the gravity of his own offence; he thought only of the chieftain's strong language in the presence of others. "Granting that I was in the wrong," he said to his mother, "could he not have called me aside and advised me there? Why did he insult me before the people?" His mother supported him. "The chieftain married your sister merely to bear him a son, not to be his queen. That place belongs to Lakumavve. Your sister has no position in the palace. Could the chieftain have rebuked you in this way if she had any? Things would have been different then. It is because the elder queen is all in all that your brother-in-law is able to treat you so contemptuously. She should have put him up to this."

Kasturi, at this, conceived great wrath against Lakumavve. The fact that he was warned in the presence of a *panchayat* brought down his prestige with the rowdies of the town, and they kept at a distance from him. This made Kasturi's life unbearable. Day after day he went on asking himself how he might wreak vengeance on the chieftain and the elder queen. It did not occur to him that, in wreaking this vengeance on these two, he might be injuring his own sister. Men like him never see so far.

The Mahratta troop which had fled some time previously returned under another commander in about a month. Ramarasa Nayak had not expected this. There was, of course, sufficient store of grain and other requisites within the fort but he had no help ready from his neighbours. He had, therefore, to send messengers to them. One messenger was sent to Mysore also. The Nayak hoped that he might be able to work up the enthusiasm of the principality to gather a militia and get help from others and attack the invader as he had done previously. In raising the militia he had naturally to enlist not merely the good people but, also, and perhaps even more largely, the rowdies. By this time, Kasturi, by boasting before these fellows of the things he was going

to do, had recovered some of his authority. When Ramarasa wanted to get these people into the militia, the brother-in-law's influence caused delay.

In obstructing the enlistment of the men over whom he had influence, the young man had at first no intention beyond showing the chieftain how powerful he was. When, however, some people listened to him and he got a feeling that he was more powerful than Ramarasa, he conceived an evil design. What great shakes was this man after all? Why should he be chieftain? Why should not he, Kasturi, himself become chieftain? Why should not he go to the commander of the Mahrattas and offer to betray the fort, and get him to capture Ramarasa and make the brother-in-law chieftain? He thought over this plan for four days and made up his mind to carry it out. The next day he went to Ramarasa and told him that he would enlist all the men required and that the Nayak need not be anxious.

The chieftain was delighted. He expressed pleasure at Kasturi's offer and told him that if he gave up his boyishness he would be like the chieftain in the town. What should he lack? That night Ramarasa took Kasturi with him on his rounds over the fort wall. This helped Kasturi

to understand the arrangements and know the watch-words. That very night he went out of the fort and spoke to the Mahrattas and arranged that he would open the gates the next night and they could enter. He made it clear, however, that they should take Ramarasa prisoner and not kill him and should make Kasturi chieftain.

Ramarasa walked his round of the fort the next night as usual and, wondering what happened to the messenger sent to Mysore and looking with disappointment on the half-hearted replies that had been received from his neighbours, went to bed in anxiety as to how he was going to get over the crisis on this occasion. Would he have to acknowledge the Mahrattas as masters? The people of the town had gone to bed somewhat late. How long would the enemy camp in front of the fort in this way? Unable to go out and come in, they found that each day was feeling like a year. Kasturi had arranged that day for his men to keep guard near the fort gate. In the middle of the night, when the town was still, he opened the gate and let the enemy in. They entered without noise and moved into the important places indicated by Kasturi and occupied them quietly. When this was over some number stood in front of the palace and raised a shout of triumph.

Ramarasa jumped from his bed and, not knowing what had happened, rushed out sword in hand. The guard over the palace had become awake and was fighting with lances and spears. The enemy was rushing in all quarters. Seeing Kasturi in the crowd, Ramarasa said: "What has happened Kasturi? Call the people. Come and fight." Hearing the Nayak's voice, Kasturi pointed him out to the Mahrattas and said: "Capture him, capture him!" When the enemy rushed on him, the Nayak wielded his sword as well as he could and kept them at a distance for nearly ten minutes. But he was alone and they were many. One of them lunged on him with his sword, It hurt the Nayak near his heart and he dropped down calling on God and became unconscious. The enemy rushed forward. The chieftain's men had now got near and took his body to a side.

The fort fell into the hands of the Mahrattas. All the people in the palace were now awake. Not knowing in the flurry of the moment what to do, they stood where they were or ran about distraught. Sometime elapsed in this way. Word went about that Kasturi had surrendered the fort to the Mahrattas. It reached Girijavve's ears and broke her heart. She felt that she had come as the

Goddess of destruction to this house. Lakumavve took in the situation quickly and tried to decide what should be done next and how the enemy should be persuaded to get out. She consulted the ministers and asked if the enemy might be offered some cash. They said: "The treasury itself is in their hands. What use is our offer of cash?" By this time it was morning. The whole town was in a state of agitation and in the palace Ramarasa died.

The commander of the Mahrattas stationed himself in the offices of the fort. Having stationed his men over the walls, he made a proclamation in the town that he had taken the fort but there was no need for the people to be afraid. They could keep their property. The victors would appoint another man as Paleygar. For four days no person should leave the town and go elsewhere. As soon as he saw Ramarasa wounded, the commander knew that the Nayak would die and arranged that news should come to him as soon as death occurred. When the news was brought, he went to the palace with Kasturi and gave assurance to the chieftain's household that he would arrange for all the ceremonies to be conducted with due honour. Lakumavve said: "Now that you have taken the town, you are our masters, and it

is your responsibility to see that everything is done properly." She then begged the commander to be kind enough to place the Nayak's son on the *gadi* and treat him as a feudatory.

When the commander walked in with Kasturi and all this talk took place at the side of the chieftain's corpse, Girijavve was there. She was aware of only one fact all the time, that her lord was dead. She felt interested in nothing else. She was not thinking at the moment whether her son should become chieftain or some one else, or what should happen to her or the principality in future. When her elder did talk of this matter, it struck her that it was inopportune. When her chief was lying dead, and even before life had completely left the body, what was this talk of making the son chieftain? Her heart was burning with the grief that her brother had joined the Mahrattas and brought ruin to the house that had fed him. When Kasturi came and stood near her, she did not look at him. The brother also kept his head down. The commander saw all this, and felt that the elder queen's self-control and the younger queen's devotion to her husband were each more admirable than the other. Girijavve, it has been said, was very beautiful. The commander noted

this beauty and desired to win Girijavve and make her his own.

All necessary arrangements for the obsequies of the dead chieftain were made. Lakumavve declared that she would ascend the husband's funeral pyre. Girijavve said: "You are the head of the household now. You have to bring up the child and put him, when grown up, on the *gadi*. You have the ability to do it, not I. You should live. I shall ascend the funeral pyre." The two queens fought for the privilege of burning with the husband's corpse: the elder saying that she was elder and therefore the right was hers, and the younger urging that the elder as the head of the household should live, and that she, the younger, as she was no one in particular, could be spared. Finally, the younger queen said: "You may do what you like. If you remain, I may remain also; but if you go, I shall certainly not stay behind." By this time the leaders of the people intervened and begged that neither queen should ascend the funeral pyre. Both should live and bring up the young prince. The Mahratta commander made the same suggestion. Finally, talk of either queen burning on the funeral pyre was dropped and the ceremonies of the day concluded.

Ten days passed. In the interval Kasturi and the Mahratta commander fell out on the question of the arrangements for the future. The commander proposed to place the infant prince on the *gadi* and leave the elder queen and Kasturi as guardians, and to take the younger queen with him. Kasturi, on the contrary, wished that he should ascend the *gadi* immediately and that his nephew should succeed him; also that the commander should take Girijavve, only if she was willing. On the question of who should ascend the *gadi* they differed violently. Kasturi reminded the commander of his promise. The commander said: "You did not tell me that the Nayak had a son." Whether this was the cause of the commander's conduct, or he was thinking that, by taking the side of the younger queen's son, he would the more easily win her love, it would be difficult to say. Whatever the cause, the dispute proceeded. Finally, the commander sent word to the queens to come and discuss the question. He said that they might come each by herself, as that would make the discussion freer, that he would treat them with respect, and that Kasturi would be with him all the time.

The elder queen came and the commander discussed with her who should be chieftain.

Then the younger queen came. He asked her the same question." She said: "When the elder queen has been asked, there is no need to ask me. What she has agreed to might be done." The commander pretended to speak of one thing and another for a little while, and then asked Girijavve to become his. Girijavve had kept her head down till then. On hearing this proposal from the commander she raised it and looked full at him and at her brother, and asked the former whether Kasturi had agreed to this proposal. The commander said that he had. Kasturi's idea possibly was that if he agreed to the commander taking his sister, that man might agree to his becoming the chieftain. Quite possibly, he had another idea also. If the sister had to go with the commander the little prince could not easily be left behind. In that case, even if the boy was called chieftain, Kasturi would be the real ruler. Hearing that her brother had agreed to her going with the commander, the queen seemed to think over the proposal for a moment and then said: "I am not worthy of the honour which you intend for me. Yet in the condition in which I am at present, I cannot refuse." The commander and Kasturi were both surprised that she should have agreed so readily. They were also pleased. The

commander said: "I shall have to return very soon, if possible within the next five days." "As you command," said Girijavve. She then returned to the palace, and made it known that she would become the commander's wife the third day after the close of Ramarasa's obsequies, that it was her desire that her brother Kasturi should become chieftain for the present, and that his ascent to the *gadi* should take place on the day of her marriage with the commander.

Word of this was sent to the elder queen. Lakumavve could not make out what had happened. She came to Girijavve's apartments to talk to her. Girijavve refused to see the elder queen. News of this went about the town and created a great furore. But what could any one do? No one could deny the will of the commander. The fifteenth day after the death of the chieftain was therefore fixed as the day for the marriage. The previous day Girijavve made it known that she and her brother would walk in procession over the fort-wall, and that after this she would marry again and her brother would ascend the *gadi*. For all her apparent meekness Girijavve was a person who always had her own way. All arrangements, therefore, were made accordingly.

The next morning Girijavve got up early and, after ablutions and worship of God, took up her child and went to Lakumavve. Placing the child in the elder's hands she said: "This was destined me. From today this child ceases to be mine. It is yours entirely and to look after it is your charge." She then begged the elder in tears to give her her blessing. Lakumavve said: "You were so good. What happened to all that goodness? If he asked you, could you not refuse? Even now if you are unwilling, tell me and we shall stop it." Girijavve said: "All that is now over. Let us not talk of it again. My way now lies elsewhere." She then left the palace. Over the fort wall, all around, arrangements had been made for the procession. Girijavve had decked herself as a bride. The townspeople were distressed to see the widowed woman in this guise. Girijavve said to Kasturi: "You come round this way; I shall come round the other way. We shall meet in the middle near the tower." Kasturi was feeling foolish and did not know why his sister was making such unwise demonstration. But he had to submit, and the people that had gathered started in procession in two groups.

The fort of Nijagal was a grand one among forts. Even today its grand look remains. On the top

of a rock of tremendous height stood walls that seemed to frown and defy the enemy. The one entrance to the fort was on the side on which the rock was accessible, and opposite to it, midway on the wall, was the tower. Steps led down from the tower into the town. It was usual for the chieftain to come and sit here for air. From the tower, one could see the country around for mile on mile: the villages and their homesteads, the ponds and the groves, dotting the expanse as in a picture. Outside the wall here the rock abutted a little and formed a ledge. This ledge was some forty feet below the fort wall. As it was level and broad and looked like a seat, people called it "the *gadi* rock" and the tower the "*gadi* tower." Having arranged that she should come from one side and her brother from the other to the steps to the tower, Girijavve called a servant-maid and said: "I must wave coloured water before my brother today. Bring a plate of it," and started to walk. The people of the town said to themselves: "What strange behaviour is this? What is all this decking and this waving of coloured water for?" They stood near their houses and watched the groups walking on the fort wall from the two sides.

In some twenty minutes the two groups joined near the *gadi* tower. Girijavve was there a few moments earlier than Kasturi. On his arrival she took the plate of coloured water and approached him. The two were thus standing in the centre of the tower, some twenty people on one side of them and twenty on the other, at a little distance. Every one was motionless watching the movements of the queen. Girijavve, grave as ever, waved the coloured water in front of her brother and gave the plate back to the servant-maid and said to Kasturi with a smile: "Kasturi, I owe this state to you. I ought not to forget you. You also love the *gadi*." The next moment she shouted in a frightful voice: "Through us the name of our parents has been fouled. My brother, we ought not to live." With the last syllable she grasped her brother firmly in her arms and jumped out from the tower.

The people did not realise what was happening. Before they could cry out in consternation, the sister and brother had reached the ledge of rock known as the *gadi*. No one falling from such a height on to the rock could live. A moment after, the bodies of the brother and sister, bereft of life, were strewn on the ground far below.

Ramarasa's infant son was made chieftain of Nijagal. Lakumavve gave the Mahrattas

assurance that he would be their feudatory, and managed the affairs of the principality through the elders of the people. The populace remembered with admiration and reverence the queen whose heroism ended the life of a brother who had come to be a pestilence to the town and the principality. As the years passed they treated her as a Goddess, and the town celebrated an annual festival in her name. Today that festival is not taking place and the town has forgotten its chieftains. Yet to those who go to Nijagal and are willing to listen and see, the oldest inhabitants can still repeat this story of a queen of ancient time, and point out the rock made sacred by the magnificent self-sacrifice of that noble-hearted and heroic woman.

THE PANDIT'S WILL AND TESTAMENT

When Chikdevaraja Wadiyar became king he made Vishalaksha Pandit his prime minister. The King knew the Pandit since the days of his boyhood when he was growing up in an uncle's house in Hangala. The pandit was a Jain by religion and a brahmin by caste. In those days he was living in Chamarajanagar, with a good income derived from patrimony and the practice of astrology. Vishalaksha and the father of Chikdevaraja had been friends from boyhood. The Pandit had a look at the horoscope and the lines on the palm of Chikdeva one day and said : "Brother, you will be king." Chikdeva's household was closely related to the then ruler of Mysore. There was, however, no reason to think then that Chikdeva would succeed to the kingdom. The Pandit's prognostication of course pleased the young man's parents but they did not believe that it would turn out true.

Some time after that Vishalaksha had called the boy up and said to him : "Do not grow like a rustic. Exercise in the gymnasium, learn riding, learn how to handle a sword. More than all, make up your mind that when you become king you will be a good ruler." He then added half jocosely :

"And when you become king, my brother, you must have me as prime minister. What do you say?" Chikdeva was a lad of spirit and agreed to all the suggestions made by this elder, including the proposal that he would make him his minister. The last promise was no doubt made in play at the time. When a few years had passed it looked quite likely that Chikdeva would succeed to the throne. On that occasion, however, the kingship went to a cousin. But very soon after that the cousin died, leaving the way to the throne open to Chikdeva. The youth became the ruler of Mysore and, remembering the promise he had made to Vishalaksha, appointed him his prime minister.

It is now a fact of history that Chikdevaraja Wadiyar was a great King. It was he that gave a definitive boundary to the land that came under Mysore and obtained for the State recognition and kingly courtesy from the Moghul Empire. He realised that a full treasury was the surest guarantee of success in administration and kept the streams that flowed into it from becoming dry. In his own lifetime those streams became ever-flowing rivers. Chikdeva created facilities for the cultivation of land and for transport in his territories far in advance of the practice of his time. In all this task as ruler he was guided and assisted

by Vishalaksha Pandit's counsel. On every occasion when any matter was under consideration, the Pandit's acute mind thought out things which were beyond the reach of any one else. It happened that Vishalaksha Pandit was not encumbered with a family. He had nothing to live for except his duties. He was either counselling the King or playing chess with him ; and when he was not doing this he was engaged in some reading or recondite speculation. As he had shown him great love from boyhood and was now helping him in the administration of the state, the King felt great affection and deep respect and unshakable regard for the Pandit. King and Prime Minister looked on each other with feelings of respect and devotion and conducted themselves as friends rather than as merely master and servant.

There was another minister of state who was also intimate with the King. His name was Thirumalarya. Thirumalarya's household had served the kings of Mysore for generations and Thirumala had grown to his high place in consequence also of his ability. If Pandit Vishalaksha had not been brought by Chikdevaraja to be prime minister, Thirumalarya might have had that place. When Vishalaksha was made premier

Thirumala became a colleague. Narasimhasastry and Padmarasa Pandit, two other persons who had also risen in the service of the palace, became other members of what might be called the Cabinet of the state.

Soon after he succeeded to the throne Chikdevaraja took up the task of regulating the collection of taxes. Administration in the past had left much discretion to the persons in authority in the various localities, with the consequence that, according to the type of man who administered, people in some parts received undue concession and were in others subjected to too strict levies. Chikdevaraja tried to remove these inequalities. This was not understood by the people in parts of the country, and they felt helpless. Not knowing the kind of king they had to deal with, small numbers in a few places had risen in rebellion. It would appear that in some of these places the incentive to revolt had come from some Jangamas. Chikdevaraja was young and energetic and put the rebellions down with a strong hand and put the leaders in prison. He then arranged a *darbar* to listen to the complaints of the population which had rebelled. Many Jangamas who were found to have been responsible for the disturbances were given severe punishments. In awarding these penalties

Vishalaksha Pandit was firmer even than the king. Men who did not like Vishalaksha, therefore, spread the rumour that in thus persecuting the religious leaders of the Veerasaiva population he was satisfying the traditional hatred of the Jain to the Veerasaiva as a religious opponent. All the ministers had subscribed to the action taken in the name of the King, but some men wished to hold only the Pandit responsible for what was done. The talk spread abroad that in requital of what he had done to the Veerasaivas the Veerasaivas would somehow wreak vengeance on Vishalaksha Pandit.

Vishalaksha was not the man to be afraid of such talk. He was a fatalist by belief. What should happen has been prescribed and it happens. Man cannot alter it. What man can do is to try to do his best in all places, at all times, under all conditions; the consequence counts for nothing. Such a man is every moment in the protection of the Power that rules over life. The Pandit had arrived at this conclusion about life as a result of long experience and much thought. To him, therefore, all was welcome that life brought in the usual course. When cautioned against the enemies he had made, Vishalaksha Pandit would smile and say: "I am not aware of having harmed any man. If, in spite of this, somebody has taken

offence and treats me as an enemy I do not see how I can change his attitude. God sees to these things and He guards."

Vishalaksha Pandit had in the administration of the State the willing and hearty co-operation of his fellow ministers. When questions as between religion and religion or caste and caste came before them, they would sit together and take joint counsel and come to a unanimous decision. Sometimes Vishalaksha Pandit would himself come to the decision, but in such cases he would invariably make it known to the other ministers and report to the King and go forward only after getting their consent and approval. On one of these occasions a misunderstanding occurred between the Pandit and Thirumalarya. A village in the Belur country which was an ecclesiastic benefice had for a long time been enjoyed by the temple of Chenkesava in Belur. The Jains of the Parsvanatha temple of Halebid had long been claiming that that village had belonged and should still belong to their temple and praying that it must be given back to them. It looks as if, at some time or other, this village had been taken away from the Jain temple and gifted over to the Vaishnava temple. The dispute came before Chikdevaraja Wadiyar and his ministers. As a

Jain became prime minister the Jain party in the quarrel took heart and pressed its claims vigorously. It happened also that about this time a Jain whose name was Butchanna became prefect of the district round Halebid. Butchanna took interest in the dispute and examined all the records of the case and came to the conclusion that the village belonged to the Halebid temple. He made a report of this to the prime minister and received an order to restore it to the Jains. Thirumalarya heard that a report had come from Butchanna. To a discussion of this report he received no invitation from the prime minister. This hurt him. But he did not wish to press himself into counsel on this topic. When the orders of the King were put into effect by Butchanna, the Vaishnavas who had lost the village came in deputation to the King, and as a first step, approached Thirumalarya and begged that permission might be obtained to wait on the King to represent their case. Thirumalarya submitted their prayer to the King and arranged for the deputation waiting upon Chikdevaraja one particular afternoon.

When the day came the Maharaja took his seat in the hall of justice. On either side of him sat the four ministers. Before the King

stood four Vaishnavas of the Belur temple to represent their case. The King turned to the Prime Minister and said: "Sir Pandit, do you know the subject-matter of the complaint of these people?"

"Yes, sire," said Vishalaksha. "I understood that they had come in deputation to make some representation about the village Iralapura. More details of what they have to say I have not heard. When they represent it to your Highness I shall hear it as also my fellow ministers."

"Well then, let them represent their case."

Thirumalarya told the men of the deputation to make their representation. The chief among them spoke: "Your Highness, the village of Iralapura has been the property of our temple for we do not know how many years. A Jain prefect of the name of Butchanna came to the charge of our district and began to give us trouble. He instigated some Jains of our part of the country to revive a petition that the village should belong to their temple, made an enquiry and announced the conclusion that the village should hereafter belong to the Parsvanatha temple. He has since obtained your Highness's command to this effect. We are servants of the temple of Chenkesaya. Services in this temple require the income from Iralapura. We have to live by payments received

for such services. If the village is taken away from the temple the income of the temple will decrease very greatly and the services will have to be abandoned or curtailed. The morsel of food that we are getting will have been put into others' hands. It is not good, sire, that property belonging to temples and to brahmins should be taken away from them. It is not good for the ruler of a state. For this reason we decided to wait upon your Highness to pray that the orders that you previously communicated might be modified, so that the temple might have its income and we our food as before. We pray, sire, that this representation of ours be given gracious consideration and the village restored to the temple of Chenkesava."

The King asked the Prime Minister when this order of his had been passed. Vishalaksha Pandit said: "Three months ago I submitted this matter to your Highness one day and obtained your approval and communicated it to the local prefect. My colleagues, Sri Shastry and Sri Pandit, were present when we discussed this question." "Was not Sri Thirumalarya there?" asked the King. "He was then not attending council on account of indisposition," said Vishalaksha. "Well," said the King, "the thing is in any case decided. It might well stay there." The petitioners said:

"Your Highness, if that should be your command we poor people will have been ruined." "That is not to be helped," said the King: "it looks as if either you or the other party should be ruined. Both of you cannot own the village."

Thirumalarya intervened: "What they would submit, sire, is something else. The village was in the enjoyment of one temple. It has now been taken away from that temple and given to another. The morsel of food these people had in hand has been snatched away and put into other mouths and they beg for redress."

Vishalaksha Pandit answered: "All that, brother Thirumalarya, was fully considered before coming to a decision. The village was in the enjoyment of the Parsvanatha temple less than a hundred years ago. Some officer of the Sri-vaishnava community in later days took it away from the Parsvanatha temple and gave it to the Belur temple. There are people alive today who knew when the village was in the enjoyment of the Parsvanatha temple. In the accounts of the Parsvanatha temple there are entries to show the receipt of income from this village. In the accounts of the Belur temple for that period there is no such entry. All these facts were submitted to his Highness before passing the order." He then

turned to the petitioners and asked: "Are there entries in the accounts of your temple of a hundred years ago to show any income from this village?"

The petitioners said: "Yes, sir. We shall show the entries."

"Well," said the Pandit, "clever people need have no difficulty in showing or making proofs." Thirumalarya again intervened: "Brother Pandit, not only have you snatched away the food of these people, you are now stating that they would fabricate false evidence. You are in authority. Why should you say such things?"

"I am saying nothing particularly about these people," said the Pandit: "I know that this has happened in a number of places. For that matter, have not you and I often discussed this tendency on the part of our people? I have heard you say that the Srivaishnavas, when they were in power, deprived many Jain temples of their property and endowed Srivaishnava temples?"

Thirumalarya addressed the King: "Sire, the question now under discussion should not be decided on my and my brother the Pandit's personal views. Your Highness is conducting the affairs of the State and administering the right. On the ground that some time in history some persons

deprived Jain temples of property and endowed Srivaishnava temples, would it be right to deprive these particular Srivaishnavas of their property today and give it to other Jains? Besides, we have only heard from our elders that in olden days men of this or that community took away property from people of that or another community. What the fact was we do not know for certain. Would it be proper to remedy some injustice of the past of which we are not sure by perpetrating an act of certain injustice today?"

Padmarasa Pandit, the other minister, entered the discussion: "I do not know, sire, what my brother calls injustice of which we are not sure. To look at some of the temples which they call Srivaishnava today is to see that they should have been Jain temples once. Not only did the Srivaishnavas deprive Jain temples of their property, they even established images of Vishnu in Jain temples, and made them into Vaishnava temples, and cast the Jain images on the streets." "Possibly they thought that Gods who did not want clothing could not need shelter," said the King and laughed.

Thirumalarya said: "Sire, when four people who have not enough to eat have approached your Highness with a petition and submitted their difficulties, my friends who should listen to their

prayer and see what relief can be given have begun a controversy on the respective merits of our groups. What my friends are saying may be all truth, but it is unrelated to the particular request of these petitioners. When all is said and done there is not much substance in talk of this kind. What Vaishnava temple of today was Jain in the past? What is it that my friends have seen to make them talk so?"

Padmarasa Pandit retorted: "Why, brother, take that important village of your people, Mandya. Do not your people say that the Janardan temple of the place was originally a Jain temple?"

"Yes. They do," said Thirumalarya. "But they do not know what is really matter for pride and what is not. When silly people of that sort tell such stories should you and I believe them all? The absurd fellow who says it thinks it an achievement. Why? He does not stop at saying that the Jain temple was converted into a Vaishnava one. He boasts that his Acharya had five hundred Jains ground in oil-mills day after day. These men chant verses and say that Ramanuja was an ocean of mercy and then add that he did this. You should not attach much value to the talk of these people."

Vishalaksha Pandit said: "I agree that the discussion has strayed from our main theme.

Now about this village, I have thought long and deeply and in an impartial spirit. It was clear to my mind that this property was in the enjoyment of the Jain temple in the past. It was only after I was fully convinced in this regard that I submitted the report of the prefect to his Highness and received orders."

"Brother," said Thirumalarya, "if you examined the evidence and came to a conclusion it should be possible for me also to reach that conclusion from the evidence." Vishalaksha said: "How can we be sure of that? That depends upon the attitude of the person examining." "Brother," asked Thirumalarya, "is this a case of immediate knowledge?"

Vishalaksha was hurt. Thirumalarya in talking of immediate knowledge was laughing at a doctrine of the Jaina faith. He said: "Brother Thirumalarya, I am some years older than you. I have great affection for you. You forget these facts and are addressing words of discourtesy to me."

The King did not see immediately the cause for Vishalaksha's temper. "What was it you asked, Thirumalarya?" he said. Thirumalarya explained: "According to the faith of my brother, the Pandit, sire, each soul has a faculty of perception which they call immediate knowledge.

Lives that have progressed sufficiently know things without necessarily seeing them. I used the phrase 'immediate knowledge' in the sense of a conclusion for which there is no obvious basis. So my senior is angry."

The King was amused and intrigued. "Sir Pandit," he said: "why need you be angry at such a statement? You can easily make some similiar statement about Thirumalarya's faith."

"He has often done it, sire," said Thirumalarya. "He has said that our faith is like a lamp placed upon a cross-wall. Our teachers did not have the courage to assert the One. They lacked the courage to assert the many either. So they shaped the doctrine of 'the One with attributes.' We face both ways, he says."

Padmarasa Pandit explained: "But that is said for fun. You too have laughed at the Jain faith at times. But the phrase you used today showed malice."

The King was wondering how he should reconcile the two sides. He wanted the ministers to talk of something unconnected with the dispute for some time and hoped in the meanwhile to see some opening for settling the difference. So he turned to Padmarasa and said: "What else has our friend Thirumalarya said of the Jain faith?"

"Sire," said Padmarasa, "you know that the main doctrine in our religion is the doctrine 'that too is possible.' 'That too is possible,' says our friend, is as a doctrine even more pusillanimous than the doctrine of 'the One with attributes.' In reply to the most absurd suggestion it says 'it is possible.' If somebody tell a Jain that his father was a woman the faith of the Jain cannot controvert the statement."

Vishalaksha Pandit added: "Talk like this looks like humour. In fact it is actuated by ill-will. Our people gave up their faith and became Sri-vaishnavas. Their descendants are now reviling the faith of their fathers."

Thirumalarya flared up in wrath: "Sire," he said, getting up, "the Pandit has in your august presence called me a descendant of Jains. Nothing more contumelious than this could possibly be addressed to me in life. I beg your Highness's leave to go now. I shall wait upon you again. I cannot stay here any longer listening to this blasphemous talk. Insult has been offered to God, insult to the servants of God and insult to the teachers of my faith. What have I to gain by listening further to such speech?"

With this he folded his hands to the King and prepared to go. Vishalaksha Pandit spoke to him :

"Why, brother, when did I say that you are a descendant of Jain people? You are angry without cause. Pray sit down." Thirumalarya sat down. The Pandit proceeded: "Your Highness, the matter in question today undoubtedly requires further consideration at your gracious hands. Apart from the request that these petitioners are making there are other reasons rendering this necessary. It would appear that in the intensity of their grief at losing property some Srivaishnava subjects of your Highness got hold of the prefect Butchanna alone one evening some days ago and assaulted him. I did not know that this quarrel about property would be carried to these lengths."

The leader of the petitioners addressed the King: "Sire, we are none of us people to assault any one. Some of our young people did say that they would catch the prefect and beat him and so on and so forth. We elders heard of this and put them down. Some days later the prefect was assaulted. If we may submit the truth to your Highness, the fact is that our prefect's character is not too good. There is talk that he violated the honour of some household women. It would appear that their people assaulted him. Merely because, in an access of bravado, our boys say they would assault the prefect, are we to conclude that

they committed the assault? Why? They utter other bluster too. One or two of the young fellows said that they would go on a pilgrimage to Mysore and assault the Prime Minister himself. We did not take it all seriously."

"That is beautiful," said Vishalaksha Pandit. "Things are matching like colours in a picture. Some time ago the Jangama rose up in rebellion on account of the tax. Today the Srivaishnava is doing it on account of land."

This made Thirumalarya again very angry. "Brother Pandit," he said, "what things are you saying in the King's august presence! What is the comparison between a Jangama who rose in rebellion and the Vaishnava whose hand is stretched in begging?" Turning to the King he said: "Sire, as these men who had lost some property wished to make a representation before your presence I made a request to your Highness and arranged for this audience. You have been gracious enough to listen to the petition and may vouchsafe any decision that seems proper to your royal mind. As for me I have been greatly hurt by the words that have been uttered by my colleagues here. If I stay on I am likely to hear more bad words and utter some myself in reply. I do not like to take this risk. If you

will permit me I shall come and wait upon your Highness tomorrow." With this he folded his hands to the King and left the place.

The King turned to the petitioners and said: "Well, sirs, we shall look into this matter. It may not be possible to give you back this particular village, but we could give you other land and that should do." The petitioners left. Then the King permitted the other two ministers to leave and went in with Vishalaksha Pandit for his usual game of chess with him.

It was late in the night when they finished the play. Vishalaksha Pandit had then to go home. The King called a servant and asked if the torch-bearer was ready.

"Yes, sire," said the servant.

The King said: "Let a guard accompany the Prime Minister."

Vishalaksha said: "That is unnecessary, sire. Now may I take leave?"

"What is the harm of the guard going with you?" replied the King. "There are plenty of people who bear you ill-will and there are now in addition these Vaishnavas of Iralapur."

Vishalaksha said: "No, sire, these people are not likely to fall upon a man. They talk a

lot when their temper is high. But they do not nurse malice. They lost their food and are naturally vexed. If, as your Highness graciously contemplates, you give them another village tomorrow, things will be all right. These also, as those others, are your children. Whether these hunger or those, it is your children that hunger."

"Why then," said the King, "did you deprive these people of the village that they were enjoying?"

"Sire, someone long ago took a morsel of food out of the Jain's hand and gave it to the Vaishnava. Some time ago my King said that that was unfair and restored it to the Jain."

The King laughed. The Pandit started for his home.

Chikdevaraja went in and took off his court clothes and wore the usual apparel for the hour of worship. Hardly had he finished this when a servant walked in in great haste and with a voice trembling in fear said: "Sire, some ruffians have done the Prime Minister to death."

The King cried out in consternation: "What is that? What happened?" Vishalaksha Pandit's house was an upstairs building in the last street towards the northern gate of the fort. To

reach it he had to go by a narrow lane beside the fort connecting two big streets. When Vishalaksha was walking in the lane with the torch-bearer in front of him and a man of the guard behind, some person jumped on him suddenly from one of the houses and delivered half a dozen hard blows on the Pandit's head and ran back. The Pandit cried out when he received the first blow but should immediately have lost consciousness. He fell down. The guard was taken by surprise. By the time he recovered and could rush to rescue the Pandit the ruffian had run away. Hearing the cry of the guard some people came up from neighbouring houses. The Pandit's head was bleeding and his back broken. He recovered from the swoon and said to the guard: "Send me to my house and go and tell the King." The guard sent word to the palace and accompanied the Prime Minister to his house himself.

It has been said that the King had great affection and respect for his Prime Minister. His first impulse when he heard that someone attacked Vishalaksha was to pursue the attackers, get hold of them and punish them. His next impulse was to go to the Pandit and see him. He put some apparel over the clothes he had on, despatched some servants to bring the medical

man to attend to the Pandit and asked to be taken to the Pandit's house. In five minutes he had reached the place and was standing beside his old friend and teacher.

On seeing the King the Pandit tried to rise from his bed but could not. "What is this?" said the King: "Should you do me the honours even when you are lying with battered limbs?" He sat down and touched the Pandit's head and hand and asked: "Where are you injured? How are you feeling?" The Pandit spoke in a feeble voice and slowly. "Sire, my journey on earth is finished. You have to give me leave to part in this life. As I was brought home now, I feared that the sight I had of you as I took of leave you in the palace was the last vouchsafed to me. My King has been gracious and has come to me on my death-bed and I have the joy of seeing him again."

The King's eyes filled with tears. He did not know what to say. The Pandit indicated with his hand where he was injured and said that he was in great pain. The King bent his head to the old man's ear and said in a low voice: "Who could have attacked you? Could it be friends of Thirumalarya?"

The Pandit opened his eyes wide and said: "What a thought, sire!" The King said nothing.

A moment later the Pandit said : " Be that as it may, sire, there is something else I wish to talk to you about. From the day I saw you as a boy it has been my constant prayer that you should prosper. By good fortune I came to be your Highness's servant. By the same good fortune I received from you the treatment of more than a friend. My King, the Goddess of this land has chosen you as Her elect and God has dowered on you the grace which will enable you to conduct yourself worthily of the election. But, my master, no king can see in person to all the things that administration involves. A king needs good ministers. More than anything he must have a good prime minister. If I had been granted more breath in this life, I should have toiled to bring far, far greater lustre to this rule of my King. But, sire, my privilege has ended here and it is no use crying over that. If, however, your Highness should condescend to make me just one promise I shall close my eyes in peace."

The King could hardly speak for emotion. With a voice that was struggling for utterance he said : "Certainly, my friend. Pray tell me what it is."

The Pandit could not speak for a moment.

The King said : " Will you tell me, brother Pandit ? "

"Sire," said the Pandit, "my coming as prime minister when you assumed the reins of kingship caused great discontent in the circles of the palace. Several men thought that they should have been given the place. Now that my time is over these same people will begin scrambling for the position. My King cannot afford to take every one that aspires for the honour as premier. The right man should be selected. If you promise to grant my request I shall name the man whom I think your Highness should appoint."

The King said: "Tell me the name and I shall tell you whether I agree."

The Pandit was sinking. He took breath and said: "Just now there is no one among your relatives in service around you suited for this place. They are loyal and hard-working. But this is not enough in a premier. The other ministers are also more or less of the same ability. The only man that from every point of view is fit for the place is....." He paused and said a moment later, "Thirumalarya."

The King was astonished. "My friend, you and Thirumalarya exchanged such words in the afternoon. What is this you are telling me now?"

"The words of the afternoon," said Vishalaksha, "were on a different matter. I submitted

what I thought was right. He had to submit what seemed right to him. Neither he nor I supported the side that we thought was unjust. Even in coming years, the man who will always follow the course that he feels is righteous and will act so as not to cause my King any distress is Thirumalarya. If your Highness should promise me this I shall be able to depart this life with equanimity."

"Brother," said the King, "I thought at first that you might propose Padmarasa Pandit as your successor."

"Padmarasa Pandit," said Vishalaksha, "is undoubtedly an honest man. Let him remain minister and assist Thirumalarya. He would not be able to manage as chief."

"Your generosity is astounding, brother Pandit. I knew you were a great man. But how very great, I have seen only this moment."

"You make me happy, sire, by your kind words and this promise. And now if your Highness could send word to him and I can see him before I die I should be so much happier. My life is pouring out of the body like water from a leaky vessel."

A messenger was despatched for Thirumalarya. But before he had left the house

Thirumalarya's voice was heard near the door asking: "How is the Pandit? Where has he been injured?" Thirumala rushed to where the injured man was lying. Learning that the King had come he slackened pace out of respect and folding his hands to the King, he walked to where the Pandit was lying on his cot and said: "How sadly have they dealt with you! Those fellows, I wonder in what too propitious an hour, talked of someone beating you. It has come true. How are you, brother? Where are you injured?" The Pandit signalled to Thirumalarya to come to the other side of his cot and took his right hand in his and pressed it to his eyes. As the younger man bent down Vishalaksha put his right hand round Thirumala's neck and drew him nearer and said: "I have not many moments left. I have begged it of the King. You must agree to be Prime Minister. Do you know I was in fear that these men might do this to the King himself? They thought that he was responsible for the treatment meted out to them. Now that evil fate has blown over my life and passed. Now, look well after your King. I shall take leave."

Thirumalarya, like the King earlier, did not know what to say. "I do not know," he

said, "what to say of your heart and mind. This very afternoon I said things that hurt you so greatly. We exchanged such words that, if someone suggests that I got you beaten, men might believe."

The Pandit put his hand against Thirumalarya's mouth. "Do not lend your tongue," he said, "to words that our enemies might speak. Those who will go on living may afford to nurse wrath and grievance. Why shall I truck with them that am going in a moment? Do I not know you? Have I not seen you? There is no speck of evil in your nature. How often have I not said to the King: 'I have at least one weakness. I dearly love a game of chess. There is nothing I will not neglect when I am engaged in one. Thirumalarya has not even that. In his leisure he devotes himself to the sacred hymns of his religion.' Now, my brother, have you promised?"

Thirumalarya said: "With gratitude, my brother. There is no command that our King may give me which I shall disobey." Vishalaksha smiled a smile of contentment and lay back in bed with a look of peace.

The medical man who had arrived a few minutes earlier approached the Pandit and put plaster and balsam on the injured parts

and began doing something to make the pulse steady.

No treatment could save the Pandit. The King sat on and when he felt that his old friend was going asked: "Brother, have you any other wish? Shall we get the priests or the teachers of your religion?" "Sire," said the Pandit, "what is it that religion can do to me now? This life of mine is going.... there where it came from. What man has the power to direct its course?" With that he stretched his legs and arms in perfect peace and shut his eyes. Within a minute or two thereafter his life departed.

The King said: "I made him talk too much. Otherwise he might have lived a little longer. Vishalaksha Pandit was as a mother's brother to me. I have lost him. And Thirumalarya, he has left the burden he was carrying to you. Did he tell you?"

"Yes, sire," said Thirumalarya, "he told me and I replied that I should always carry out my master's wishes."

The King and minister then left the place. Approaching the outer door the King put his head near Thirumala's ear and said: "Brother, did you notice his last words? He talked like an unbeliever." "Sire," said Thirumalarya, "many

people are, in their words, believers and in all their action unbelievers. Our brother the Pandit talked the words of an unbeliever. But everything in his life was proof of God's existence. Where are the believers who can take his place here, now that he has gone?"

Thirumalarya looked after all that was to be done for the good of the departed soul. The decision that the Pandit had given about Iralapur he did not alter. With the King's approval he gave a gift to the Belur temple in lieu of the one which had been taken away. When Chikdevaraja made him prime minister and carried out Vishalaksha Pandit's last will and testament, there was not much discontent even in the hearts of the other aspirants for this place, as most people knew that Thirumala was the fittest to succeed Vishalaksha as prime minister.

ANOTHER OLD STORY

Parasar's father had been a prominent person in the circle of devotees at Kanchi. After some years in Kanchi he had moved to Sriranga. Parasar was born some years after the shifting to Sriranga. The father spent most of his time in attending on the Acharya, and all matters in the house, from getting the worship of God conducted to looking after the education of the son, became the mother's responsibility. Growing under the care of his mother, Parasar made good progress for his years in his studies, and by approaching able teachers of the time acquired much learning. Losing his father young, he soon, by his scholarship and ability, made a name equal to his father's or higher.

Scholarship and learning apart, Parasar, by the guidance of his mother in the details of daily life, learnt a hundred things which make a better thing of the life of man. On every possible occasion in that daily life, his mother would be stressing the need for faith in God. When all is said and done, there is nothing greater to be taught or learnt. Yet men generally are not sufficiently aware of this fact. One in a hundred speaks of it. One in how many really feels it?

If the son said that he had not been able to bring enough flowers for the worship of God, his mother would say, "How much flower does God require? Does He require any at all? If you have much flower, offer much; if you have little, offer the little. If you have no flower, offer leaf." If someone said that he was not able to go to the temple and that it was a pity, she would say, "Keep that pain in the heart, and when you fail to go to God, God will come to you." Her attention to the guests that came to the house was something to watch and to admire; and if worship was being conducted the sincerity which she put into the little acts with which she helped in the worship looked out in every movement.

While still young, therefore, Parasar became a devotee as well as a scholar. He then went to the Acharya himself for the finishing touches to his education. When, in talking of the texts and commentaries in the course of the lessons, the Acharya made some statement, Parasar would say, "Yes, that is how my mother explained the passage." When a thing like this was repeated several times the Acharya felt a little surprised. When some days later Parasar's mother attended a gathering at which the Acharya spoke and she bent down in reverence, he said to her, "Your son

is remarkably able, my mother. There is very little for me to teach him. He seems, indeed, to have learnt a great deal from you."

She answered: "I have taught him to walk humbly in the presence of the elders; the rest he has from his father and from you and the other teachers."

The Acharya said, "When I was explaining a verse of the *Gita* to him, he said that he had heard the explanation from you previously. How does it happen that you know the *Gita* so well?"

The lady replied, "My father was very learned in sacred lore. As a little girl I used to sit near him when he taught his pupils. What I heard then has remained in my mind." And this was true. The lady did not know how to read and write. But what did this matter? Reading is a means for getting access to knowledge. It is not itself knowledge. One man may read and not learn so much as another may by moving amongst the learned and hearing them talk.

Parasar's mother trained his mind by talking to him frequently of the incidents of his father's life. When the father left Kanchi to go to Sriranga, he had given up all the wealth that he had earned there and started empty-handed. The

lady at first felt sad at having to leave everything, but she got over the feeling easily. At the moment of leaving the house, however, she said to herself that she ought to have a small vessel with her in case her husband wished to drink some water on the way. It would be useful even after they reached Sriranga. So she took a silver cup with her. On the way they had to pass some forest country and were by themselves. The husband in front and the lady behind, they had proceeded some distance, when the lady said that she felt afraid.

The husband asked, "What have you and I to fear? Be at peace."

When they had walked a little further the lady again expressed fear.

The husband stopped and looked at her. "Have you brought anything from Kanchi? I told you to leave everything behind," he said.

The lady said that she had brought a silver cup, thinking it might be of use to him.

Her husband said: "The God who gave in Kanchi, will He not give in Sriranga? I did not imagine that you would forget this. Now, throw away the cup."

The lady spoke no word in reply but took out the cup and threw it away. When they had

gone some distance, the forest became deeper. "Are you afraid now?" asked the husband.

The lady answered, "No." "To possess is to be afraid," he said: "Cast off property, you cast off fear."

And so they came empty-handed to Sriranga, and God who gave prosperity in Kanchi gave it again in Sriranga. Men honoured her husband and he was able to serve the servants of God in the new place in the same way as in the old one. The son heard this story from his mother ever so many times. He loved to hear about his father and was never tired even if the same story was repeated. Listening to his mother and learning from his teachers and brooding over the courage and the faith of his dead father, Parasar developed a faith in God and a practice of His presence that in any other person might have been the reward of a very long life.

Thus, as a young man of twentyfour, Parasar had won a high place among the devotees in the temple of Ranganatha. In his house there were frequent celebrations of special worship in which numbers of people took part. It was usual for such people to share the consecrated food. To help his mother on these occasions, Parasar had in his house a brahmin servant. This man was

also useful in the performance of worship. Parasar would himself conduct the worship in his house on most days, but on the few days when he was engaged in something else, he would ask this servant to perform it.

When Parasar performed the worship he would sometimes spend hours together, and some days a very short time, at the shrine. The brahmin servant's worship always occupied a certain length of time. It consisted of a certain amount of repetition of the texts in praise of God, certain performances and service to the images, certain offerings, all according to a scheme prescribed by the elders. In this scheme, also, there was some provision for omissions and additions, so that when a man was in a hurry, he could finish the worship somewhat more quickly than usual. On some days when the servant conducted the worship Parasar would say to him: "Is worship over so soon?" This always hurt the man.

"Why does he ask me such a question?" he would say to himself. The third or the fourth time when he was asked this question by his master, this brahmin thought within himself: "This gentleman sometimes finishes worship in less than a quarter of an hour; yet when I spend three quarters of an hour on it he tells me I have finished soon."

Very often when Parasar came home late his mother would come and ask, "Why are you so late, delaying the meal of all the devotees?"

"Is worship over?" Parasar would ask.

"No," his mother might say. "The brahmin is busy in the kitchen. If he should conduct the worship, the meal would be further delayed."

Parasar would say: "Very well, mother, I shall conduct the worship myself. Spread the leaves for dinner." He would then go and finish the worship very quickly, so that the guests could begin to take their meal without delay.

"What kind of worship is this?" the brahmin would ask himself, and when the next day his master told him that he had finished worship too soon, he would say to himself, "Is the worship I conducted shorter than the one my master conducted yesterday? Why does he find fault with me?" In this way he developed some dissatisfaction with his master's treatment of him.

While things stood thus, there was a festival of some importance in the house. Preparing for the unusually large party that would sit down for dinner, Parasar told the brahmin to conduct the worship himself. As the devotees who had gathered all sat outside, the servant sat near the shrine, and, repeating the sacred texts in a resounding

voice, he conducted the worship fairly elaborately. When he finished and came out, however, his master said: "You repeated too few of the Tamil prayers."

This observation, made in the presence of all the guests, hurt the poor servant a great deal. Unable to contain his vexation, he walked in and said to Parasar's mother: "Madam, my master treats me with very scant courtesy. In the presence of so many people he tells me that I finished worship soon, that I omitted the texts of praise or the Tamil texts or other texts. I have to bend my head in shame."

The lady said: "It is possible that you do omit some text of praise or other text which is essential. That may be why he says so. Do you omit such texts?"

The servant answered, "Well, madam, I may omit some texts, but I repeat at least the other texts. But my master sometimes finishes worship without repeating a single text. Is the worship that I conduct more incomplete than that?"

The lady said, "Do not worry about it too much. He is young, you see. Even if he is careless and says a word or two you should not

take it too much to heart." That evening she called her son and said: "Son, if you tell our brahmin in the presence of so many people that he omitted this text and that text in conducting worship, it makes him look small and he feels unhappy."

"Yes, mother," said Parasar. "But it did not strike me that he would take it in that way. Quite so. Why should I make him feel small? I shall not say such things to him hereafter." The brahmin servant who was inside the house could hear this and was greatly pleased.

Some time after this there was a series of dinners in the house on account of the services for the Dasara. One day Parasar performed the worship and finished it in perhaps ten minutes. The next day he asked the servant to perform the worship. That man really took longer. But when the worship was over, Parasar, forgetting the promise he had made to his mother, told the man that he had finished the worship too soon. The brahmin went inside and said to the lady, "It has begun again, madam. The master finished worship so quickly yesterday. I took much longer today. Yet, he says it was incomplete."

"I shall tell him again not to hurt you," said the lady, but thought within herself that in the

man's own interest she ought to help him to understand the difference between his attitude and her son's in worshipping God. So that day, as the small gathering that was present sat down to dinner and her son sat at one end, she placed a leaf next to her son's and asked the servant to sit down also and take his food. "The company is not large and I can serve." This was nothing strange or unusual. So the servant sat next to the master. The lady served ghee. Finishing all the rest of the company and coming to her son's leaf, she said that the ghee she had brought was exhausted. "You did not take out sufficient ghee," she said to the servant, and went in. Coming out a moment later she served her son and the servant. The servant noticed that she served more freely to her son than to himself. The lady seemed to be aware of it also and said: "It is too much," and went in. The servant said to himself: "She loves her son and is partial and has served more ghee to him than to me. This is quite natural. If it were my mother, she would have served more to me." After this the company began eating.

The servant took the usual little morsels of ghee and rice intended for the divinities presiding over the vital powers of the body. The few

grains which he put into his mouth repeating the first text seemed to him terribly bitter. He wanted to spit them out, but could not think of doing it. He wondered what had been served as ghee and looked down the line of people dining. All of them were going on with their meal. His master, sitting beside him, had finished the five little morsels for the five divinities and had mixed the rice with something else and had taken it in his hand for eating. The servant wondered what had happened to himself.

To make sure that his rice did taste bitter, he took another four grains and put them into his mouth. There was no question: the food *was* bitter. What! Was it bitter to him only and not to the others? He remembered that, on the shelf inside, the vessel of ghee was placed just beside the vessel of margosa oil. "Did the old lady by any chance serve the margosa oil to me, mistaking it for ghee?" But then, she had served the same stuff to her son and he was eating his meal like any one else. He did not seem to feel that the food was bitter. So the servant wanted to ask the lady what had been served. By that time, she came out with some other dish. The servant said to her: "Madam, what you served the second time to me and the master, was it ghee or something else?"

She answered that it was ghee.

He said: "This tastes bitter. Margosa oil was placed along with ghee on the shelf. Could you, by any chance, have brought that and served it?"

"Really?" asked the lady. "How absurd that would be! I shall see." She went in and brought a vessel and said: "Yes, you are right. I served the margosa oil instead of the ghee." She then turned to her son and asked: "Son, I served this same stuff to you. Is it not bitter?"

Parasar tasted the morsel he had just put into his mouth and answered: "Yes, mother, it is bitter. What happened? Did you serve something else?" Saying this, he put the rest of the food to one side. The lady blamed herself greatly for her carelessness and brought fresh rice and ghee for both her son and the servant, and served it to them. While doing this, she said to her son: "Shouldn't you know that margosa oil was served to you, without being told? How could you eat so many grains of that bitter food without knowing the taste?"

The son said: "I know the taste of margosa oil as well as any one else; but I was absent-minded."

"What were you thinking of," asked the mother, "that you were unable to detect margosa oil?"

Parasar answered: "In worship today, this gentleman"—referring to the brahmin servant—"repeated the text about the Universal Soul which plays in a spot as small as the tip of the spike of the *neevara* grass. I was thinking about those words."

"A fine thing to think about," said the mother, and went in.

Parasar proceeded: "Godhead really must be wonderful, but equally wonderful is the language employed by the Veda in describing it. In space the size of the tip of a blade of grass, can the universal All-Soul play in freedom. This blade sways in every slightest breath of wind and when it sways, God sways too; and swaying when the blade of grass sways in every breath of wind, God holds within himself the lords of creation and destruction and existence, and all the multitudinous host of divinities in the universe and beyond. How impossibly wonderful! What should that existence be like which can differ so greatly from this which we call ours? Wondering what it could be, I was unable to notice the taste of this thing which was served to me." Talking of this text, the company finished the dinner.

When it was over, Parasar's mother called the brahmin servant and said, "Friend, do you now understand the difference between your way of worship and your master's way?"

Even before she put this question, the servant had understood that she had served the margosa oil to her son and to him deliberately. She had served more of the oil to her son than to him. He had not been able to swallow four grains of the rice spoilt with that oil. His master had taken several small morsels of it unaware of that taste. The mother had served the oil with the object of making him see the difference between himself and her son; and, really, he was astonished that his master's mind should actually have been so far from his food that he did not know the taste of margosa oil. He said to the lady immediately: "Yes, madam, my master worships with all his mind. I do not know how to do that."

She said, "Not only does he worship with all his mind; he worships always. We worship only when we sit in front of the shrine; he worships when he is taking his food, when he is bathing, when he is cleaning the ground, or spreading the leaves for dinner, or when he is walking in the street. Not a moment of waking does he spend without thinking of God."

The servant begged the lady to forgive him for having complained, in ignorance, of her son.

The lady said: "Now that you know the truth about your master, forgive him when he says anything that hurts you. He is my son, it is true, but even to me he is a man to be respected. I wanted you to benefit by your contact with him. There is nothing for me to forgive in what occurred today. The offence was mine. Seating you before a leaf for dinner, I served you margosa oil with this offending hand. I have to beg you to forgive me."

The servant prostrated himself before her to show that he understood her kindness. "You treated me," he said, "as if I were another son and did what you did in order to save me. I only pray you to continue to treat me as your son and servant for evermore."

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JOGY ANJAPPA'S FOWL

Of all the old people of our village the oldest without question is Jogy Anjappa. He says, now and then, that when he was a boy this or that thing occurred and generally in such a case there is no one who is aware of the occurrence. When the great Mutiny took place Anjappa was a youngster. If you ask him how old he is, he says he must be a hundred. He has been this in fact for the last ten years. In consequence of this accumulation of years Anjappa has established the right to advise every one else in the village on every occasion. Others may doubt his right to advise but Anjappa himself is never troubled by such doubt. To any one demurring to his advice Anjappa has one final answer. "What is this, young man? When your father was a boy my beard was grey. Is my word to be flouted by urchins like you?" It should be added that, in consequence of his wide experience and length of years, the advice that Anjappa gives is in most cases sensible. As he is Nestor in years Anjappa is Ulysses in counsel.

Three days ago Anjappa came to Rangappa's house. Rangappa has recently been appointed a magistrate on the bench for the taluk. The

whole of our village is happy on this account. It is proud to think that the shanbhog of our village has been given the power to send people to prison. Village people have a notion that it is a great thing to have this power. Only Amildars and officers of higher status had this power in the past. Nowadays Government have taken away this power from even Amildars. In one sense, therefore, a man appointed to a bench of magistrates has reached a status above that of an Amildar. Anjappa was as proud of the new status of the shanbhog of his village as any one else and came up to congratulate him and, incidentally, to give a word or two of advice.

Rangappa saw Anjappa coming and said :
"Come in, Anjappa. Pray, sit down."

Anjappa : "Well, master, they say that you are appointed a magistrate. It is right happy I am to hear this."

"It is all very well to be right happy, Anjappa. But what is the use ? It is labouring hard for nothing. I shall get no pie for the work I shall do."

"No pie ? Why not ?"

"You see, Anjappa, they call this thing being magistrate on a bench. It is an honorary office. Government do not pay you for this."

"Government may not pay you. But why is there no pie? The men who got pay always got as much other money as their pay. Pay is not all the cash that a magistrate gets."

"That is all an old story, Anjappa. In these days bribery is out of the question."

"Not for all. For those who have not the courage it is out of the question: not for men of spirit. But apart from that, Rangappa, supposing you get angry now with the Amildar, you can ask him to stand up and fine him, can you not?"

"If it had been you that had been appointed magistrate, Anjappa, you could have done it. But you know I am shanbhog of this village. If I fine the Amildar because I am a magistrate he will make me stand up for being a shanbhog and remove me from my appointment."

Anjappa could see that this was only proper. "Quite so," he said. "You are bigger as magistrate. He is bigger as Amildar." Dwelling on this profound thought Anjappa took out his bag of betel leaf and nut, and began a search for a dry leaf and a piece of nut. Leaf and nut in Anjappa's bag were aged even as he was. He bought leaf often enough, but on any day there would be some old and withered leaf in the bag, and every time he would use only that leaf

thinking it a pity to throw it away. By the time he finished such dry leaf the new supply would have been growing old. Thus it is Anjappa's portion in life to have fresh leaf and yet chew withered ones. That bag and the nut it contains are famous in our village. We people have the notion that a nut is something to be chewed with leaf and swallowed. That is just like our folly. Nut is not intended to become pulp in the mouth speedily. Its function, more accurately, is to tickle the palate and make the saliva flow and become soft with great gradualness in the process and merge with the leaf. If the nut should become pulp immediately you put it into your mouth where are you going to find the supply for chewing all the twenty-four hours? After considerable search, Anjappa decided which leaf had reached the farthest stage of withering and which bit of nut was likely to resist softening best and put them into his mouth, with a little *chunam* from a small metal casket. A few minutes later he said: "I came to say something to you, Rangappa."

"What was it, Anjappa? Tell me please, and I shall listen with pleasure. You are a man with wonderful experience. There must be a hundred things you know which may be of use to young people like us."

"I am glad you know that," said Anjappa. "Yes; I do indeed know a hundred things. Now that you have become a magistrate, Rangappa, you should, before giving punishments, consider whether people placed before you are honest people or rogues. You ought not to be carried away by what the police and the lawyers say and give punishment. I came to tell you this."

"You are right, Anjappa. But a magistrate should conclude who is a rogue and who is honest by hearing the words of other people. How else is he to know?"

"Ah," said Anjappa: "that is the point. A magistrate does not know that one man is a rogue and another man is honest by merely hearing what others say. He must also ask the man who stands before him what the fact is."

"Anjappa, if you will not take offence, I shall ask a question."

"What offence can I take, master? Go on and ask."

"Were you ever placed before a magistrate as an offender?"

"Quite right, Rangappa. It is exactly that that I wanted to tell you today. Those rascals, you know, they said I stole a fowl. I said I had

not stolen. They insisted that I did. Finally, they decided that I did commit the offence. They told me that I should pay a fine of twenty rupees, otherwise I should go to jail. I paid the fine and came home."

"How could they say that you had stolen the fowl, Anjappa? Was the fowl with you?"

"That was the trouble, Rangappa. The damned thing was found with me and so I was caught."

"Then you had stolen it?"

"Not so fast, my master! It is just there the mistake lies. The fowl was in my possession. But I had not stolen it."

"Then," said Rangappa "You have to explain the thing to me. Come now, let us hear what had happened."

2

This occurred some forty years ago. Anjappa was then of middle age. He used in those days to wander from village to village in pursuit of his profession. You know that the occupation of a *jogy* is to decorate himself according to the tradition, and sling a bag on one shoulder and a single-stringed musical instrument on the other, and go over the villages, singing the ballads which have

come down from his grandfather's days and getting some grain for the trouble. In the days of Anjappa's grandfather and great-grandfather a *jogy* could only beg and never plough land. Times are now bad and even *jogies* have begun to plough land. This, says Anjappa, is like brahmmins having leather shops in towns. Today we think that it is something beneath honour to go begging. Anjappa would not agree to such a proposition. "Well, sirs," he would say, "you think it a small matter to be a *jogy*. You have to follow your father or uncle for twenty years carrying the *kindiri*, singing the songs he sings and not minding the distance and the song. It is then only you have learnt your occupation. Any young fellow can stand behind a plough and twist the tail of a bullock and say *chow, chow*. Is it as easy to sing a song? Your tongue has to pronounce the words of the songs and you need some brains for remembering. Do you think that the same as ploughing? Do you think every one can say 'Lakshmi' correctly? Ask them and they will make it *ksmi*, *kasmi* and sneeze. Do you think it easy to say Droupadadevi? If I say da de the other fellow will say de da. By the time I could say I had learnt our occupation I was a young man of twenty-five. It was after this my

father said: 'Now you are all right and can go about by yourself.' So Anjappa impressed upon us that it was no small thing to attain *jogi*-hood. It was nearly as difficult a matter as the getting of the B.A. degree.

I believe that Anjappa as *jogy* wandered over some sixty to seventy villages round about ours. You should know that a *jogy* does not start on his round like any commonplace beggar. When he goes out with his bag he prepares himself as a man who plays the king on the stage prepares for his part. A *jogy* follows tradition in decorating himself in this way, the main point of it being that he belongs to no party in religion. He is neither Saiva nor Vaishnava nor does he worship the lower and evil gods. At the same time he denies none of them. This he indicates by wearing the ashes of the one and the saffron of the other as also the yellow of the third. Along with this he has the eye-black. Dwelling in thought of the powers of the universe the *jogy's* eyes develop a light which it is dangerous for the common man and woman to see in its full brightness. That is the reason for his touching his eyelashes with black. In particular, when he is describing the characters of Bhima and Hanuman and is repeating their words, this veiling of

the brightness is necessary. Otherwise the people who look at him may fall in a swoon. Just as there is this scheme of painting for the face there is a scheme for the clothes to be worn. The headwear should have a minimum of three colours, consisting really of torn cloth of so many colours stitched and put together. Anjappa when young was a handsome fellow. If he put on this paint and this clothing and went out singing his song, the women and the children of a village used to flock around him. The women of the bigger houses would ask him to sit on the *pials* and sing for some time. "I have sung in many places," says Anjappa, "and delighted many hearts." That time forty years ago, of which I am now speaking, was the heyday of Anjappa's popularity as a *jogy* and the meridian of his success in his profession.

Among the places which Anjappa visited as *jogy* in those days was Kalapura. I am not giving the real name of the village. If there is a place of this name within the reader's knowledge he has to make up his mind here and now that that is not the village I am talking of. For obvious reasons I am giving this name to a village whose real name is different. Kalapura was a fairly large village. Once he went there, it was sometimes necessary

for Anjappa to stay in it for two or three days. I have said that Anjappa was a handsome-looking man. That is a fact which we should remember in this connection. If this handsome man decorated himself and went out, what wonder that some women in a village should feel fascinated? If the women were not very young, Anjappa had no hesitation in sitting with them and talking for some time, for there would be no one taking objection to it. If the woman was young, Anjappa would hesitate. Supposing the man of the house saw he would say: "I say, *jogy*, take your alms and get out of the place. What business have you talking to the women?" Supposing a stranger saw, he would say: "Well, well, our *jogy* is fairly forward. He is prospering," and laugh. To a man who lived by alms either situation was equally dangerous. Once in Kalapura the wife of the patel of the place asked Anjappa to sit and recite to her. She was the third wife of the patel. When Anjappa had finished singing, she gave him some betel leaf and nut. Anjappa sat down chewing. The husband came in the meanwhile and was terribly angry with the *jogy*. Ordinarily, Anjappa would not talk back in such cases, but the Gowda used some bad language and Anjappa lost his temper. "Well, sir," he said

in reply : " you are saying these words to me. I am a stranger and nothing to you. But what are you thinking of your wife? She is respectable? If you are not content with that, teach her to be more. Why do you abuse me?" The patel said : "Look here, *jogy*. Get away and be careful. Otherwise, I might catch you some time and make you squeal." Anjappa said some words in reply and picked up his alms-bag and walked out.

On the next two or three occasions when Anjappa went to Kalapur nothing particular occurred. The next time that he visited the place after this, he sat in one of the smaller streets and began his song. A young woman from a neighbouring house came out to hear him and stood near her door. When Anjappa finished his song and got up to go she called him and gave some alms. Anjappa went to the same place next day and began a ballad. The young woman invited him to recite on the *pial* of her house and gave him some grain when he finished. It was a big house for the village, and Anjappa enquired whose it was and who the young lady was. They told him it was the house of a certain big man. Anjappa does not remember the name now. They were well-to-do people and the young man of the house was sowing wild oats. It was believed

that the girl herself was no better than she ought to be. Anjappa did not then know this fact. The household was small, consisting of that young woman, her husband and that husband's mother. They reared fowl and the mother-in-law traded in fowl. When Anjappa visited the village again he went to that house to sing. Anjappa had no bad intention in going to that house. The girl was pretty; she liked to hear him; so he liked to sing to her. It is natural for a *jogy* to like to see a pretty face reflecting the beauty of his song. When a number of people gathered round him and he sang his ballad and delighted them, Anjappa used to feel that he had done his duty. That day, when the crowd had dispersed, Anjappa sat there by himself, chewing leaf and nut. When some minutes had passed the young woman of the house came to the door again and said: "Jogappa, before you leave the village, come here for a moment." Anjappa said: "Why, little mother? I am in fact starting now." She said: "It was such a pleasure to hear you sing. I have said to myself many times that I should give you something. Only, you know, you must get away with it very quickly. If my mother-in-law should know she will make trouble." Anjappa had some fears about taking what she might give; but he was

not prepared to refuse. Before, however, he could decide whether he would accept the gift or not, the young woman went in and called to him from within. When he stepped in, the girl threw a fowl into his bag and said: "Run away now, run away." Anjappa had no time to stop and think. He walked out to leave the place. His heart was thumping for fear somebody might stop him. When he was just outside the door the girl said: "Jogappa, take care you do not tell any one that I gave it to you." Anjappa said no word in reply and moved on. When he had walked about half a mile from the village he thought he was out of danger. There was a well there with a grove of trees beside. Anjappa sat under a tree and, thinking of what had occurred, chewed leaf and nut.

This was Anjappa's first experience of the kind. He prayed that it might be the last. It is undoubtedly a good thing to get a fowl for a song. But, then, alms given openly is one thing; alms given covertly quite another. There was nothing to fear in the former; the latter is fear first and alms next. The incident had, however, sent Anjappa's heart out in love and tenderness to the young woman. What a good creature she was! How pretty she was! Her colour was the colour

of a ripe lemon fruit. Having such a wife in the house, what a fool her husband was to be going after other women! "This is life," he said to himself. "If you are well-to-do you are dissolute. If you are poor you are a rogue."

In thus reflecting upon life and its chances, Anjappa forgot that he was, after all, not very far from the village. Someone from the village came that way in a little while and stood near him and asked: "Well, Jogappa, what are you doing here?" Anjappa said: "Nothing particular, brother." "Have you filled your bag?" "Not quite." The villager asked: "What is it you have got? *ragi*?" With this he looked into the bag and saw the fowl. He seemed surprised and said: "What is this, Jogappa? You have a fowl in your bag." Anjappa's heart jumped within him. "Yes, brother," he said: "they gave it to me in a house." Realising that if he stayed there longer he would be running risks, Anjappa got up and slung his bag to his shoulder and prepared to move on. By this time an elderly woman and a man could be seen coming from the village towards the well. Some distance behind them was the young woman who had given the fowl to Anjappa. Anjappa's knees gave way for fear and he was unable to step forward. He had a pre-

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sentiment that the thing was going to end badly. As he stood there wondering what would happen next and the party approached him, the young woman signalled to him with her hands from behind her companions not to betray her. The elderly woman came up to Anjappa and, turning to the young woman, asked: "Is this the *jogy*?" Her companion was the watchman of the village. He said: "Yes. This is the *jogy*." The woman asked Anjappa: "Jogappa, did you by any chance see one of our fowls?" Anjappa said: "Yes, mother, a wretched fowl has somehow got into my bag. I did not know. This gentleman told me." The villager who had arrived first said: "Why, Jogappa, you said somebody gave it to you." "Oh, brother," said Anjappa, "who would give a fowl to a *jogy*? It is hard enough to get a handful of rice. Will people hand over fowl?" The watchman stepped up and opened the bag. Within lay the fowl quiet as in a swoon. The elderly woman said: "This is getting fine. We allow these fellows to come to our houses and they begin to spirit away fowl. Get along now and we shall tell the patel. This is pretty *jogiship*." With this she showered some words of abuse on Anjappa. Anjappa said: "Mother, I did not steal the fowl. If it is yours pray take it.

I do not object. Only don't bother me." "What is this fine talk?" said the elderly woman: "To hear you speak, one would think you were a saint. If you did not steal the fowl, how did it come to you?" Turning to the younger woman, she said: "Is not this our fowl, girl?" The young woman said: "I cannot say. It looks like our fowl and again looks as if it is not. Jogappa might have bought it somewhere." "What is all this?" said the watchman: "We shall go to the patel of the village and tell him everything. Let him decide what should be done." Anjappa should have liked to hand over the fowl and get away, but he did not see how to manage this. He knew that the patel had a grudge against him and feared that he would do him some harm. Yet, he had to take up his bag and return with the people to Kalapur.

It is no use describing in detail all that took place in the village. Many people who had lost fowl previously and many others who had lost none, all joined in remembering that once previously when Anjappa visited the village they had lost a fowl. The patel came and said: "Ah, ah, my *jogy*! You have been singing tunes for a long time. Now I am sending you to a lock-up and you will sing another tune." The police station

was not far away. Anjappa was sent there with the stolen article and a report. There was no end of recording of statement and evidence, and Anjappa could get out of the place only after undertaking to appear before a court on a day fixed for the enquiry.

That day came and he stood before the court. What was there for enquiry? It was a fact that the fowl had disappeared from the house of the elderly woman who was complainant in the case. She had identified the fowl. It was a fact that that fowl was in Anjappa's possession. Three people spoke to that. So the magistrate asked Anjappa what he had to say.

Anjappa: "Noble sir, I know nothing of all this. It must be that when the crowd was around me and I was singing, this fowl strayed up to me and, as it was warm and comfortable inside the bag, got into it. I did not notice it and, when I left, I went away with it."

"That might do as a fable," said the magistrate; "but no fowl really enters like that into a bag. I advise you to speak the truth."

"Noble sir, I am speaking the truth. I am willing to swear to it on any deity your honour proposes. I swear I did not steal the fowl."

"I dare say you did not steal the fowl. But, equally certainly, the fowl could not of its own accord have walked into the bag. Did any one give it to you?"

The question was shrewd. Anjappa did not expect it and was taken by surprise. He was, therefore, on the point of saying that the young woman had given the fowl to him. That answer, however, did not leave the tip of his tongue. Suddenly, he saw before him as in flesh and blood the pretty face of the poor creature whom he would expose, heard her voice telling him not to betray her, saw her hand signalling to him to save her. "Poor thing," he thought to himself. "She cared for me and gave the fowl. Why should I betray her?" So he held back the answer and stood still. The magistrate saw the hesitation and asked again: "What do you wish to say?"

Anjappa said: "What shall I say, noble sir? You are a righteous judge. You have to find out what occurred. I can only say I did not steal."

The magistrate wrote out a charge against Anjappa and asked him what he pleaded and whether he had any witnesses for the defence. Anjappa said: "I have nothing to plead, noble sir, and I have no witness. God alone is my

witness." The Magistrate wondered that a thief should speak so courteously and, with a feeling that there was something behind the evidence which had not come out in the enquiry, ordered a fine of twenty rupees and, failing payment, simple imprisonment for fifteen days. Anjappa paid the fine and came home, with his colours by no means flying.

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It is over forty years, as I said, since this occurred. Anjappa completed the story and said: "What is there in merely being honoured by the name of magistrate? It is the portion of God to punish the wicked and protect the good. When that duty comes to man he has to act like God. He should fear blundering. Without fear, a magistrate may, in getting fetters put on people, be only committing an offence himself."

"What you say is true, Anjappa," Rangappa said. "But if you do not tell the magistrate the fact, how should he know it?"

"To do justice only to the extent one is told, why should one become a magistrate? Why do we want intelligent people like you to administer justice? Your business is not merely that; it is to find out the truth."

"Take your case. You paid the fine to save the girl's honour. That was only right."

"There," said Anjappa, "there is more to the story. That young woman was intimate with a young fellow. She was handing over fowls to that fellow previously. Her mother-in-law had asked again and again where the fowl could have gone. The daughter-in-law had said that somebody should have stolen them. The mother-in-law would not believe. The young woman thought that the best way of convincing her was to show the fowl with somebody on one occasion. That's how she made the gift of fowl to me and betrayed me."

"So the young woman herself complained of you to the mother-in-law?"

"Yes, my master, that is how it occurred. In came the mother-in-law some time after I left and said: 'Where is the fowl?' 'I don't know,' said the daughter-in-law. The mother-in-law asked what could have happened to it and whether anybody had come. The young woman at first said she did not know, and added later that some *jogy* had come. The neighbours said that the *jogy* had been seen going away very fast from the direction of the house. So things conspired together and I was caught."

"Did you not go and take the girl to task afterwards?"

"Nay, master," said Anjappa, "you are boys; I am an old man. Why do you ask a man in his old age to describe the things he did in his youth. I did go to the young woman and did ask her and things were all right." I did not press Anjappa to tell us what this last phrase meant. Rangappa said: "That's all right then. If by any chance you are brought before me, Anjappa, I shall find out the truth and let you off." "Oh, my master," said Anjappa, "what risk is there of my standing before a human judge hereafter? The only judge before whom I shall stand hereafter is my God Venkataramana of Tirupati. Of course, I have to go before Him. When I stand in the presence, He will cast a look on me and ask what I plead. And I fall at His feet in submission admitting my sins, and, my master, you know there is no punishment there. I admit and He forgives." We could say nothing to this confession of Anjappa's. The old man sat on a little longer, referring to other incidents of his youth. Then he said: "Master, will you not give me betel leaf and nut in honour of your having become a magistrate?" Rangappa told his boys to go in and bring some leaf and nut and gave it to

Anjappa. The old *jogy* received the gift with great joy and solemnity and left saying: "Remember what I told you. Now shall I take leave?"

THE KRISHNA IDOL OF PENUKONDA

The kingdom of Vijayanagar, which bent its head low on defeat in the battle of Talikota, tried to lift it again a little in Penukonda. Neither the splendour of the old capital nor the heroism of her earlier kings could be seen in the new capital. The pride of Penukonda was that, like a shop which once sold flowers saving itself from closing, by starting to sell grass, it saved the name of Vijayanagar and prevented the world from saying that the kingdom was wiped out. Though the great days of Vijayanagar could not be revived, yet the people's love of their kingdom, enthusiasm in religion and pride in culture did appear even here, in the close co-operation of the population with the administration, in fair-sized temples newly built, in literary work newly produced and fresh activity in the other arts.

But to the great misfortune of the State a change of rulers occurred thrice in fifteen years. Sadasiva Raya, a puppet king even prior to the battle of Talikota, survived that defeat some five years. Thirumala Raya, brother's son to Rama Raya who was the virtual ruler at the time of the battle of Talikota, succeeded Sadasiva. He ruled for three years and died. Sriranga Raya succeeded

him and ruled for ten years. When he died, his sons were far too young. So it was decided that his brother Rama Raya should be king. As fate would have it, this Rama Raya died even before he could be crowned. The kingship, therefore, went to Rama Raya's younger brother Venkatadri. Venkatadri had been governor in Chandragiri. Even after he became king he preferred to stay in that place. Thirumala Raya, son of Rama Raya's first wife, was governor of the province round Seringapatam and Venkatadri stationed Sriranga, younger brother of Thirumala, as the Yuvaraj in Penukonda. This Sriranga was the son of the second wife of Rama Raya and was still very young. King Venkatadri, therefore, placed Jagadevaraya, the commander-in-chief of the kingdom, in Penukonda to assist Sriranga. The new capital, thus, saw many deaths in the royal household in so short a period, and led a somewhat lustreless life, like a woman who has lost several children and broods with sadness on the past and looks with anxiety towards the future.

The Sultans who laid Vijayanagar in ruins did not leave Penukonda in peace. They came twice in the days of the elder Sriranga but were beaten and had retired. After his death and about the time that Rama Raya should have been crowned,

they came in another expedition. They were again beaten and retired. Now they came for the fourth time. Twenty-four years had passed since the battle of Talikota and Venkatadri had been king for four years ; and it looked as if a crisis like the crisis of the battle of Talikota had again come to the kingdom. The second day after the enemy laid siege to Penukonda, Lakshumamba, mother of the Yuvaraj, Sriranga Raya, was kneeling in front of the image of Krishna in the temple within the precincts of the palace and praying : " My God, preserve this kingdom which is yours." Her daughter-in-law, Yashoda Devi, was helping her mother-in-law in the worship and, as the old woman prayed, was attending to the lights near the image of Krishna.

Sriranga was not a competent prince. If Rama Raya had ruled for some years the young man might have learnt from the father something about the art of government, but the father's death deprived him of that privilege. When Venkatadri became king this boy was less than sixteen years old. Lakshumamba had some hope at the time that her step-son Thirumala or her own son, this Sriranga, might become king. In that she was disappointed. She was, however, happy about one thing. King Venkatadri, her brother-

in-law, liked her son Sriranga better than her step-son Thirumala. This was one reason why he had stationed Sriranga in Penukonda and called him Yuvaraj in preference to Thirumala. Lakshumamba, besides, was a very able lady. When still young, in her father-in-law's time, she had won the respect and love of the people by her noble ways and good life and consideration for the poor. King Venkatadri for this reason greatly respected his sister-in-law. On Sriranga's being stationed in Penukonda, Lakshumamba had assumed the reins of administration. She was made of stuff that could have built a kingdom. It was therefore not difficult for her to administer the territory round Penukonda. She ruled in such a way that the population did not feel harassed, treated heads of districts with consideration, and paid the wages and other perquisites of the army regularly, and retained its loyalty. In the two years that she conducted the administration she improved the condition of the country. Her son Sriranga was by nature good enough, but there is a belief that a boy brought up by a woman cannot come to much. In spite of all the discipline that Lakshumamba thought she was enforcing, the Yuvaraj grew up to somewhat loose living. When he completed eighteen years the adminis-

tration was given into his hands and he became practically ruler of a territory before his powers were fully developed.

Queen Lakshumamba was a woman of devout disposition. She was aware that, if the territory should hold on as one unit, its king should show that he stood for objects which commanded the approval of the people as a whole. They should, for instance, see that the ruler wanted to do good to them; that he would attend to their needs in accordance with their desire. The king, on his side, should show that God is above everything and righteousness is the supreme law, and that he would worship God and walk in the way of righteousness. Partly from inclination and partly to win the love of the people, therefore, Lakshumamba had enlarged the temple of Sadasivesvara which earlier kings had got built in Penukonda. She added a tower to the temple of Srinivasa. She began also to build a small new temple on the side of the small palace, between it and the temple of Sadasivesvara. As one of the sculptors was highly skilled, she got him to make a number of beautiful images. Among them was this image of Krishna before which she was worshipping today. Until such time as a proper temple should be built for housing

the image, she got a small structure like a temple built close to her apartments and placed the image in it. This Krishna was the image of her heart. Like a mother who might get ornaments made for a child she had got a flute of gold made for the image and put it in its hands. It was before this Krishna that she was now kneeling, praying that God might not allow the work of her hands to go to waste.

The queen had got her son married when he was fifteen years old. The young woman, Yashoda Devi, came from among the relatives of the royal household. She was handsome and was very good. The lady who is going to be queen is in all lands expected by the people to possess nobility both of birth and of soul. Yashoda was young in years but was very cultured. Born and brought up in a good household and only one year younger than her husband, she came to her mother-in-law immediately after marriage and learnt from that elder what was necessary to complete her upbringing.

For the two years before he became Yuvaraja in his own right, Sriranga had conducted himself fairly well. He behaved to his mother with respect and affection, evinced interest in the work of administration and struck the people about him

as a prince of promise. But this did not last long. In the tradition of royal splendour that had grown up in the palace at Vijayanagar, personal service to a prince was done mostly by young women. The great king Krishna Deva Raya was a man of taste and had widened this tradition, and the lesser kings that succeeded continued it. When Vijayanagar was prosperous it was natural that a large number of pleasure-givers should seek its patronage. Though the number of such people was less in Penukonda than in Vijayanagar, there still was a fairly good number of them coming from north and south. These included singers, musicians, dancers and women of pleasure. They came every year, mostly for the more important festivals, and occasionally in between. So far as the festivities were concerned, the prince or the governor of a province kept up a show much like that of the king himself. He was not hindered in his expense so long as he kept within the limits of the income derived from his area. The Yuvaraja at Penukonda could therefore make gifts to scholars and artists, support poets and establish charities. To dancers and singers coming to the festivities, the Yuvaraja, as a patron of art, would give considerable presents, seeing their dances or hearing their music.

The very year that Sriranga became Yuvaraja, a young woman from Northern India came to sing. She was beautiful and skilled in her art, and she sang with an earnest desire to please the king. Sriranga had known the joys of married life for three years. On looking on this young woman it seemed to him that this beauty was far greater than the beauty of his wife. He arranged that the singer should stay in the court. In a case like this the king's desire is merely to be known. Once it is known there are plenty of people to help it to fruition. A fine house was found for use as the singer's residence. In a few days the prince raised her to the status of his mistress. Within a short time Gaganamahala, a fine building opposite the new temple on the side of the palace, became the residence of the mistress. For some time Sriranga spent one night in the palace and one night in Gaganamahala. When a few months had passed, he began to spend night after night in Gaganamahala. This building had been constructed by the Rama Raya who was in power when Sadasiva Raya was nominally king. Sadasiva and Thirumala used to sleep in it. Their reason for preferring the building was that, when they got up in the morning, they could, from the window of the bedroom, get for the first thing in the day a

view of the image of Srinivasa in the temple in front. Today, however, the building itself became, as it were, a temple, and the prince that preferred to sleep in it thought, not of the image of God in the temple in front, but of the handsome young mistress within who ministered to his pleasure.

When Lakshumamba saw her son going the wrong way she felt greatly humiliated. For the first time she learnt what it was to feel ashamed in the presence of respectable people. Once or twice she begged her son to give up the path he had taken. Once she told him that his duty to the girl she had brought to be his wife demanded that he should conduct himself decently to her. The prince made no reply when the mother remonstrated, but he did not give up his ways. One day, early in the prince's new way of life, the princess implored him to save her self-respect. "What have I denied you?" the husband asked her: "Your position is unimpaired. I am worshipping you as a Goddess." The young wife could not carry the talk further, nor could she repeat her prayer. The mother had one expectation: the son would stray in this fashion for some time and then regain his previous goodness; how could he go on for ever in error? But, again, she had also a fear that he might not return. A

man who steps into the quicksands of evil life, how can he ever come back? If in the early years of being heir-apparent he conducted himself in this way, what chance was there of his succeeding as king? If the Yuvaraja is righteous, people might agree to his becoming a king. If he strays, they might say that they do not want such a man and ask that someone better might rule them. Thought of all this gave Lakshumamba much fear. She had a feeling that further evil was in store for the country; and was greatly disturbed and distressed.

This was some two years ago; things had become worse since then. There was in those days quite a small town on the top of the hill at Penukonda. It was then usual for the well-to-do people of the place, when there was a siege, to run to the top with the more valuable of their possessions. These people had small houses inside the hill-fort. The king himself had a small palace there with a temple beside and a pond attached to the temple. In normal years there used to be a floating festival on this pond for the Narasimha worshipped in the temple. After Alakasundari arrived, the prince visited the hill three or four times each year. She liked to float on a raft in water. There was a big tank

close to the town at the foot of the hill ; but the prince and his mistress would have found it hard to command any privacy floating on the tank. Alakasundari wished to be alone with the prince. They would, therefore, float on a raft in the pond beside the temple on the hill. In the bright half of the month of Aswiya of this particular year, the prince had spent night after night floating on the pond, listening to Alakasundari's singing. It seemed to him at moments that he was the king of the Gods floating on the waters of the Mandakini and taking his pleasure with the courtesan Rambha. Life seemed to him so beautiful and so full of pleasure. From the Gaganamahala he had failed to look at the image of God in the temple in front. Now from the top of this hill beside his capital he failed to look at the country over which he ruled.

It was while matters stood in this state that news had arrived of the troops of Bijapur coming to attack Penukonda. The people of the town were seriously agitated. Jagadevaraya sent messages to the chieftains in the province, instructing them to guard the ways carefully. He looked to the disposition of his own troops and stationed strong sections at various points along the way and prepared himself for a fight. The king

received the news but did not show any interest in the arrangements. He seemed to be content to leave matters in the hands of the commander-in-chief. Some time later, Penukonda learnt that the enemy had beaten the feudatories guarding the way in two engagements and had arrived within two leagues of the capital. Jagadevaraya could have gone out and fought the enemy but did not do so. Why, it would be hard to tell, but there were several things which might explain his conduct. In the first place, he had a reason for envying Lakshumamba and the Yuvaraja. Venkatadri had married his sister and he wished that his nephew should become yuvaraja and later on king. That sister, however, had borne no children, and before a nephew could be born, this boy had become yuvaraja. Secondly, he had desired that the yuvaraja should marry his own daughter and Lakshumamba had come in the way. Jagadevaraya had wished that somebody closely related to him should become king. That desire had thus been frustrated by Sriranga and his mother. His intention at the moment might possibly have been merely to expose to the king at Chandragiri what kind of person his heir-apparent was. Jagadevaraya, however, had the confidence that he would beat the enemy off in

the end. In the meanwhile he pretended that he awaited orders from the Yuvaraja and did nothing. The Yuvaraja having left things to the commander-in-chief, and this commander-in-chief being perhaps anxious to show how useless his master was, things developed in such a way that the enemy arrived without much difficulty at the very gates of the capital.

No one knew what the Yuvaraja proposed to do. So far as people could see, he, in the fervour of his pleasures with Alakasundari on the top of the hill, seemed to be unaware of the danger in which the kingdom stood. The invading army was not large, but to have allowed it to come to the gate of the capital was foolish. It did not appear as if the Yuvaraja realised this even now. He came down from the hill the day after the enemy encamped outside the fort and issued orders that the defending troops should get ready for a fight that day or the next. Having arrived at the palace he asked his mother and his wife to go to the village on the top of the hill. The mother spoke harshly. "This kingdom has known great kings. They were your forefathers. You do not deserve the great position they left you. You were wrong to stay in the capital and allow the enemy to come to within two leagues.

The people of the town rely on their king to protect them, and stay here in that belief. They have committed their life and all to his protection. If a king does not realise what a responsibility this casts on him and stays within his palace, lolling in pleasure, what is to become of the town and of the country? I shall not go to your village on the top of the hill. If the country and the capital are destined to some harm I am willing to bear that harm with them. There is danger to me if our troops are beaten and the enemy enters the town. Very well; in such a case, if no one else leads the defenders, I shall stand in front of them and hearten them and lead them." The prince was very wroth but he had not retained the right to answer his mother. He told his wife that it would be better if she would go up to the hill. She said: "I cannot bear to go to that house again." The mother-in-law said: "My dear, go at least to Chandragiri. It is safer there. I have nothing to fear from staying here. But you are young and ought not to run any risk." The princess said in reply: "I married this husband and have lived with you. I shall stay with you to the end. If there is danger of dishonour, is there not a way of ending life? I cannot leave you in danger here and go to Chandragiri to be safe." The

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prince was greatly vexed with all this talk, but, unable to influence his mother and his wife, left the palace and went out to see the arrangements for defence.

That night the enemies attacked Penukonda. The defenders did not give way. Jagadevaraya fought with uncommon courage. Sriranga joined him and encouraged the troops. The courage and enthusiasm of the prince were a surprise to the commander-in-chief. Jagadeva was a real fighter and could appreciate valour even in the Yuvaraja. He honoured the young man for his very high courage. He should also have felt some fear lest his tactics should end in harm, and not merely in exposing his master. Several times in the course of the engagements he told the Yuvaraja that it was not right for the king to get into the thick of a fight, and assured him that he would look after the battle, and begged him to stay in the palace. "I shall send you news from time to time," he said. The Yuvaraja refused. That day the invaders were beaten off. The next night they resumed the attack. Again the battle raged. If it were merely a question of fighting, Penukonda was perhaps quite safe even that day. But the enemy had by intrigue won over the guards of the small gate towards the

tank. When the battle had raged for some time some number of the enemy got up the fort wall on the side of that gate and dropped into the town and ran through the place shouting their war cries. The people of the town were terrified. The enemy's men managed to open the main gate from inside and attacked the defending troops from behind. Surprised by this attack from behind, the defending troops moved a little away from the fort. In the tumult of this fight, Sriranga sent word to his mother and his wife to go to the hill at least now, and if they could not go to the hill to get away to Chandragiri.

Lakshumamba and her daughter-in-law were engaged in prayer in front of the image of Krishna as described earlier, when this message of Sriranga arrived. Lakshumamba thought that they might perhaps go up to the hill. She had heard that her son had been fighting valiantly and had recovered respect for him. But the princess said: "Mother, I implore you; I cannot go to where that woman is. Go you, and do not trouble what will happen to me." The mother-in-law said: "Shall I leave you alone and go to save myself? What is it I should fear? If you are not prepared to leave this place, we shall both stay here." The princess said: "When

my husband is engaged in a fight risking his life, how shall I run away to save this body? Two years ago I asked the physician and got these pills. I shall use them today." "What are you talking about?" said her mother-in-law: "Do you think I am dead? Pray, cease talking like this." She then called to the assistant steward of the palace and told him that she did not desire to go to the top of the hill, but wished to go into some shelter just for the night. The next day they might move away to Chandragiri. The assistant steward spoke to the chief of the palace guard and arranged that the Yuvaraja's mother and wife should go out of the town and take shelter in an underground room in a field belonging to him. Lakshumamba agreed to this. So he led the old lady and her daughter-in-law by a roundabout path to this place of shelter.

At the moment of starting from the palace Lakshumamba stopped for a moment and said: "Let us hope that the town will yet be saved, but supposing it is not, the temples are sure to be desecrated by the enemy. If they should reach the palace, will they leave my Krishna unscathed? Come, take up the image, I cannot leave it here." The image was not easy to carry; yet she refused to leave without it. "I had hoped," she said,

addressing the image, "to build you a good temple very shortly. I have been denied that privilege. I begged you to stay for ever in my home. It has now come to my leaving that home myself. Be with me wherever I am and save me." She knelt before the image with this prayer and got up and then started with it in the hands of the steward. The din of fighting within the town had grown louder in the meanwhile, and messages of the progress of the fight had ceased to arrive. The mother-in-law and the princess, therefore, left the town with speed with that image of Krishna. Within half an hour from then they were in their place of safety.

As the night advanced the fight grew intenser. Some part of the enemy's troops was able to get into the town and run all over the place. The Yuvaraja was still in the middle of the fight near the gate, heartening his troops and fighting himself. The commander-in-chief came up to him and told him that he could not allow his master to risk his life in the fight any longer and insisted upon putting him on a horse and sending him into the palace. "I shall see to the fight," he said. "Your Highness should immediately go with the royal family to the top of the hill." The prince saw that Jagadevaraya was very earnest. He was also a little anxious about his mother and wife.

So he proceeded to the palace with just one horseman as guard. Having sent the Yuvaraja towards the palace Jagadeva rushed to the front of the defending troops again and set them on to fight the enemy with redoubled vigour.

The Yuvaraja came up to the palace at great speed. Dismounting from his horse he walked towards the apartments of his wife. The servants noticed this and said that she was not there and that his mother and his wife had gone somewhere for shelter. They could not say where they had gone. The chief of the palace guard knew, but at the moment he was not there. It was not possible, hearing what the servants said, to guess where the ladies had gone for shelter. Could they have gone to the village on the hill? "It is possible, sire," said the servants. "It is possible that they moved in the other direction to mislead any enemies that might be watching."

The tumult near the entrance to the fort seemed to increase. A horseman came with a message from the commander-in-chief asking that the palace guard should protect the person of the Yuvaraja. The Yuvaraja did not know what to do. He thought that his mother and wife should have gone to the hill. Where else could they go? So he himself started to go up.

Late in the night it really looked as if Penukonda should fall into the hands of the enemy. Detachments of their troops put the people of the town in a fright and actually occupied part of the palace. In the insolent feeling that they were victorious they committed many atrocities. A group rushed into the temple of Sadasivesvara, another into the temple of Srinivasa.

By all appearances, Penukonda should, by morning, have been a camp of the Sultan of Bijapur. But Jagadeva was a host in himself. Determined to die in defence of his town if necessary, he heartened his troops again and again and, in defiance of what looked like defeat, fell upon the occupying troops in all directions and made it impossible for them to settle in. The whole of the next morning was occupied in turning the enemy out of the town. At last this was done, and the gates of the capital again fastened and the remnants of the troops stationed as guards on the wall. In the afternoon the commander-in-chief sent word to the hill requesting that the Yuvaraja should move away to Chandragiri and return with some help. The siege now resumed its old form : what remained of the invading army standing outside to recover and make another attack and the Penukonda troops remaining

within and waiting for a propitious moment to rush on the enemy and drive him away.

When the Yuvaraja reached the hill the previous night, he saw that Lakshumamba and her daughter-in-law had not come there. As things stood, it looked as if the town had fallen into the hands of the invaders. Even before any message came from the commander-in-chief, therefore, the Yuvaraja had decided to go to Chandragiri and bring help. Jagadevaraya's message merely confirmed him in this plan. That night, he and Alakasundari got down from the hill by another route with the help of some people and left for Chandragiri. At the moment of starting Sriranga thought of his mother and his wife and, wondering what had happened to them, felt unhappy. He sent word to Jagadevaraya requesting that he should make enquiries about them and send him information. By a kind of reasoning not unusual in such circumstances, he got some comfort by thinking that it was even likely that they should have gone to Chandragiri the previous day and that there was quite a chance that he might see them there.

He reached Chandragiri, and saw that they were not there. But there was no way of ascertaining what had happened to them. Jagadevaraya

at Penukonda made some enquiry but it did not lead to anything. The chief of the palace guard who knew that they had followed a servant of the palace, did not remember his name. Even if the name had been known they might not have been able to think of the particular field in which the underground room was located or reach the room. In a few days, however, everyone knew that the elder queen and her daughter-in-law had gone to an underground room in a field for shelter. A troop arrived from Chandragiri to render assistance to the defenders at Penukonda and all were fully engaged in seeing the last of the enemy. This took some fifteen days. By this time all trace was lost of the movements of the ladies. What could have happened, said all, to the old lady and her young daughter-in-law?

The underground room which gave shelter to Lakshumamba and Yashoda Devi on that fateful night became their grave. They had intended to stay there the next day and return in the night: the assistant steward would bring them back as soon as it was dark. The room was several feet below a small stone structure on the steward's field. To those looking from outside, the structure would appear like any common stone shelter. Lakshumamba's idea was that, as soon as it

became dark the next evening, the steward would go to Penukonda and see if they might return, and then she would decide what to do; but as ill-luck would have it, a section of the attacking army, beaten off from the fort, retired into this field and camped on it. Some of its members got into the stone structure. They were there the whole day, eating, drinking, and smoking, and laughing and talking wildly. The steward was unable to leave his hiding place. Until the invading army was finally beaten off, fifteen days later, some part of it was encamped on this field and in possession of the structure. Lakshumamba and Yashoda Devi and the steward who had tried to give them shelter had to end their lives in that shelter by taking poison.

Jagadevaraya saved Penukonda. Sriranga returned to the place and ruled again as Yuvaraja. But no one could say what had happened to the Yuvaraja's mother and wife. Two hundred years later, a cultivator of Penukonda was trying to clear for cultivation a small area in his field where there had been an old stone structure. As he dug the ground his pick struck against a slab of stone. He wished to see what this slab was and, removing the earth on the top, found that it covered an underground cellar. He wondered what there

might be inside : it might be some treasure. So he came in the evening by himself and looked in. He could not make out what there was within because of the darkness, but was also afraid to get in. So he decided to come in the morning and see. But by this time other people had heard that this man had lighted upon a treasure trove. This rumour brought the servants of the government to the spot. Some men were sent into the cellar to see what there was in it. In one corner, at the point where they descended, they found some large earthen pots. One of them still had the grease of very old ghee. Against the wall in front there stood an image of Krishna. It is said that there was a small flute made of gold in the hands of the image. Lying in two lines in front of the image were some bones and two skulls. In the corner at the distance, close to the wall, lay another heap of bones with a skull.

Critics of art considered the image of Krishna a beautiful piece of work. Even other people could see its exceeding beauty. Images like this, not installed in a temple and not receiving worship, are specially welcome to antiquarians as helping study. The authorities sent the image to the Oriental Arts section of the Museum. The bones were sent to the College of Surgeons for the

anatomist to say how old they might be. He seems to have said that they were not very old and belonged to two women and one man. They were placed in the anatomy room of the college for study by the pupils.

The image of Krishna is still to be found in the Museum. Perhaps the bones also are still there in the College. But the circumstances in which the bones and the image were found are forgotten, and no one now feels any curiosity about them.

THE LAST DAYS OF SARIPUTRA

When his great Master had attained his noble and ultimate release, Sariputra turned towards his village. He had left that village over forty years ago. When he came away he was still young: today, he was an old man. Yet it seemed to him as if it was just a few days ago that, as a young man, he heard that Sakya Muni was preaching a new doctrine in Benares and had wished to hear the teaching. On that day which seemed so near, he was Narasimha Sarma. He became Sariputra later. What a marvellous change of every kind had come with that change of name! The only son of the foremost Vedic scholar of the brahmin settlement of Narasimheswara, beside the holy stream of Narmada, became a disciple of the great Buddha. All that appeared to him now as if it related to someone else. From his boyhood his father had trained him to be a great scholar; and he had won a name for scholarship worthy of that father and brought honour to his household. When the son was twenty years old the old man had married him and brought home the daughter-in-law. It was a happy household and Narasimha Sarma lacked nothing. Yet he was not contented. It appeared to him that all

his learning was worth nothing and that scholarship is no more than fruitless exertion. Like a person who waters a creeper for a whole year and finds that it bears no flower, the young scholar felt dissatisfied. He did not feel properly convinced that God existed. There were learned people round about him who claimed that they knew God through the Vedas. But their conduct was not worthy of men who knew the great thing that God must be. Seeing this discrepancy between their profession and their practice, Narasimha said : "What is the use of this knowledge ? The knowledge which makes man God, I shall consider worthy of that name. All else is misnamed knowledge." This is dissatisfaction to which very great learning is sometimes liable and Narasimha's vast learning had led him to it. This was how, when he heard that the Buddha was preaching a new doctrine in Benares, the young man decided to hear the teacher, and see if he said something worth while. His father was then aged and told his son not to go. "Do not waste your time," he said. "It seems he belongs to the community in Kapilavastu. Those people have given up the Vedas. This teacher of new doctrine is, it seems, their king's son. What can a man know of truth who gives up the Veda ?" But

the son had already come to a state of half belief in Buddha. A man who, in early youth, gives up for the search of truth a palace, a kingdom, a wife and a son, is without doubt a seeker after truth. If such a man performs austerities for six years in the forest and says at the end of it that he knows the truth, he could not be speaking falsehood. What is the objection to his teaching? That it differs from the Veda? But, really, the Veda is eternal and one. It is known by God's grace. The knowledge that came to so sincere a man as this Sakya ascetic, what other than the Veda can it be? And if it is something else, what objection could there be to seeing what it is? If merely listening to it could affect one's faith in the Veda, how little should be the worth of its meaning? One should not question a teacher's teaching; but if a teacher's teaching brings no peace of mind, it should be permissible to listen to other teaching and get the meaning of the teacher's teaching and seek for peace. Is not the Teacher in the heart a teacher? Why was that Teacher telling him that what he had learnt could not be the whole of truth? Argument after this fashion led Narasimha to the conclusion that he ought to go and listen to the Buddha.

A few days later he left home and went to Benares; and having gone there he did not

return. As Buddha had left Yashodhara and Rahula, his wife and son, Narasimha had left his wife Vedavati and his two year old daughter Kumudini under his father's protection and stayed away. Only now he was returning to his village. Till that moment he had found all the joy of his life and fulfilment of all the impulses of his being in the service of his Master.

And that Master : what a master he was ! People who had not seen him could not imagine that such a man could exist. Even for him who had seen, it was not possible to say exactly what the qualities of the teacher were. How did that man become so much a God ? From the day that Narasimha saw Buddha in Benares to the day that the teacher entered on his final release, that man, that God, had uniformly, without hesitation or fear, without vexation or indifference, without thought of himself or his, never once appearing to feel that he was bigger than others, or that others were separate from him, shown the love of a brother to all living things. What could such a teacher be but God ? After Krishna, this, no doubt, was the next incarnation ; the ninth incarnation. The Buddha undoubtedly was God. How could a person who was not God have that unshakable self-confidence ? Who but God could

know such peace? "I have seen God in the flesh," said Sariputra. "My life has borne fruit."

And Sariputra passed the occurrences of the day of his first seeing the Buddha in review. The picture of that first vision was still fresh in his memory. It was in a park adjacent to the city and the teacher was sitting under a huge *peepul* tree. There was a large crowd sitting around. Close to the teacher were four followers of the Veda. A discussion was going on, the votaries of the Veda putting questions and the new teacher giving answers.

"According to you, does God exist or does He not?"

"What do you mean by God?"

"The great being who pervades everything, is omnipotent and rules the Universe."

"You may have seen the great being for you are describing his qualities. I have not seen Him."

"How are we to decide whether your doctrine is correct?"

"My doctrine is correct to me."

"Then, why do you teach it to other people?"

"I tell them to formulate their doctrine for themselves."

"Then, are you not establishing a new faith?"

"Every man has to establish his own faith. I have established mine."

"What, then, do you teach?"

"Ask those who have been taught."

"Are you against *karma*?"

"What do you mean by *karma*?"

"Ritual and sacrifice, and the services prescribed for daily observance."

"Doing them with an understanding of their meaning may have effect."

"Then, why do you say that it is permissible to give them up?"

"Hold on to something else, I say, and give up this."

"Giving them up should surely do harm."

"Yes, to some; but not to all."

"Who are the people to whom it will not do harm?"

"They themselves know."

"So, it is as each likes? And they may do it if they like and not if they do not like?"

"It is not as they like but as they believe."

"But if they believe wrongly?"

"Then even the ritual will go wrong."

"How can abandoning *karma* result in good?"

"From the light within."

"How if it is dull?"

"Then, from another's light."

"If that too is dull?"

"Man has no other way."

"Ah, but there are the Vedas."

"There is the Veda."

"Is that false?"

"The Veda is not false."

"Then you believe in it?"

"Certainly. I am living the belief."

"And yet, you have given up *karma*."

"What is it you are meaning with your *karma*, *karma*? There is no living without *karma*."

"This is merely words."

"So is the Veda."

"It is our conviction that you are ruining the people."

"Look at their conduct and tell me?"

And so this wrangling went on for a long time and the whole crowd was listening. At the

end of it, the teacher said: "Friends, you have come to test me and prove me. Go home now and test and prove yourselves in the same way. Give your answers to yourselves. I do not ask you to confess to me or to others. Say to yourselves definitely how much of the Veda you really believe and how much you do not believe. It is a good thing to proceed in a certain path because our elders tell us it is good. At the same time it is equally good to ask ourselves what it is that seems right to our own judgment. Our elders are the Teacher outside. Give ear to their voices. But within us is a Teacher. His voice too must be heard. Do not cover Him up and bury Him. The truth which you perceive when the two voices are in unison, that is truth indeed. Until then what we know as truth is put on." The interlocutors left the place. The teacher then spoke to the gathering around regarding the witness within man and sent them away.

This very first view of the teacher had won Sariputra's heart. So uncommon were the sincerity and patience and sweet temper of the Buddha. When the discourse was over, the young man walked up to the teacher and told him everything about himself and asked him to accept him as a disciple. "Oh," said the Guru smiling, "a man

so learned as you might be a teacher. How can he be a disciple?" And a moment later: "Who knows what service you are destined to do to truth? Stay with me if you feel inclined, but not necessarily as a disciple." Sariputra remembered these words of the teacher. As permitted, he had stayed with the Buddha and, within a few days, been accepted as a disciple and named Sariputra. Slowly, as the days passed, the light of the great teacher's life cleared the doubts that had darkened his mind. He realised what he had only heard previously, that God is a power pervading everything. Man is man when he becomes aware of God within himself. It is from impulses coming from that inner presence that life becomes gradually better; and the first step in realising the unrealisable nature of God is to become aware of this process within one. To attain to this knowledge is the chief purpose of life. It is because of this that the Veda became great. By the same token, the Veda is one and single. Time and country and speaker do not count. One eternal truth has appeared in all teaching everywhere, with differences due to the situations. This is how the life of all mankind has grown in service of truth. Each man must do the duty that comes to his hand. This makes life fruitful. Narasimha

heard these things sitting by the teacher and understood them with a clearness that seemed strange. He was then able to look at all the activity of mankind with an equal eye and an untroubled heart. When some time had elapsed, Sariputra had so grasped his teacher's doctrine that the Buddha would say to Vedic scholars who came to dispute with him: "I am no scholar in the Vedas of which you speak; I cannot discuss them with you. My friend here has studied them and can discuss them to some purpose. Please speak to him." Sariputra would, on such occasions, touch the master's feet and come and sit amidst the scholars and, using the words of the texts which they held sacred, would prove to them that the Buddha's teaching was the fulfilment of their texts. It might seemingly run counter to the teaching of the Vedas, but it did not do this in reality. By the grace of the teacher he was able in such discussions to talk with patience and skill and convincingly. Buddha was so delighted with the way in which Sariputra carried on such discussions that one day he said: "To the truth that I have seen, Sariputra is as the right eye and Ananda as the left eye. Through these two it is to get currency." Ananda was a nephew of the teacher's. He was his close personal attendant

and trusted disciple. That the teacher should have thought of him as the equal of so beloved a disciple made Sariputra both happy and heavy. How could he deserve so exceeding and pure a love? "When shall I become worthy of this great love of my great teacher?" he would say to himself again and again, and pray that by the teacher's grace this might happen soon.

As year followed year, the life of the great teacher flowed broad and peaceful like the stream of the Ganges, spreading happiness along its path. Mingling in the stream of that life the lives of his associates shared its breadth and peace and usefulness. In woodlands which were the abode of beauty and joy, in groves of trees which stood mighty and noble, in hermitages on the banks of streams whose waters were translucent blue, the teacher discoursed to the people of the good way in life, living also a life which was beautiful and joyous, and noble, and stainless. That way seemed designed to build a righteousness wide as the country over which it was preached. For forty years the teacher led this life before attaining release. When he was gone, Ananda wept orphaned and Sariputra sank under the grief of his God's going out of view. "What shall I do next?" he said to himself, and, unable to

decide immediately and remembering the old father and household which he had left long ago, he thought he might go to his village before doing anything else.

Why, one may ask, should this man who had given up everything in youth, forgotten even that he was a follower of the Vedas, and become an ascetic of the order of the Buddha, have so late in life thought of his village? This question arose in Sariputra's mind. Yet for various reasons it seemed to him necessary to go to his village. As a young man he had left his young wife and her daughter as a burden on his old father. He had no anxiety about the household; yet his coming away must have caused great pain in it. When he came away he had no idea that he should not go back. But when he felt the impulse for renunciation after meeting the teacher, he, without a thought, gave up any idea of returning. A text of the Vedic teachers advises man to obey the impulse for renunciation when and where it comes. When the impulse came to him, therefore, he obeyed it without delaying even to go to his village and tell his household or for any other purpose. Some years later, he went with the Buddha to Kapilavastu and saw there the way in which the teacher had treated Yashodhara and

Rahula. To Buddha the whole world had become his household. Yashodhara was to him a woman like any other woman, worthy of consideration and respect. Rahula was a son worthy of love like all children. The teacher often described his attitude by the words: "I freed myself from home, but tied myself to the world." He did not keep away from his wife and son for fear that he might become bound to desire. "The man who is afraid of bondage and keeps away is in bondage where he is," he would say. Once or twice, remembering the story that he had heard from Sariputra of his father and wife and child, he had said: "If you think it necessary, go to your village for some days. You said your father was old. As you would show consideration to any old man, you should show it to the old man whose son you happen to be. Your going might give him some pleasure. Go and console him and return." Sariputra had replied: "My father is a man of great wisdom. He is not a person to grieve because I have come away. My wife has all her life grown in a home of great culture. She will have conducted herself as becomes the mother of the household. I have no anxiety of any sort." He had, besides, as the days passed, developed the conviction that his

teacher was an incarnation of God. If he stood in the presence of his God, what cause was there for anxiety about the lives in whose welfare he was interested? Today Sariputra had the same conviction, but now there was this difference. He would then have had to leave the teacher to go to see his old home. Today his teacher had left him and he was free to think of the service of other people. He would like to know how his household had fared and they would like to know about him. This was Sariputra's reason for turning towards his village.

As he came nearer and nearer to his old home, Sariputra recollected in more and more detail the life of his boyhood. There was the broad bed of his dear river Narmada ; there were the beautiful gardens which the waters of the river fed. There, close to the stream, were those huge banyan trees. Very near there was the place where he and other boys of the settlement used to come of a morning to gather flowers for worship. There, in the distance, was the bathing-ghat and, just below, the pool called Narmada Tirtha. Between the green of the grove of trees the white mantaps of the ghat shone bright. Some people were standing near them and the buildings looked the same as before.

Indeed, seeing from this distance it was easy to believe that the people were the same that stood there forty years ago. And really, today looked exactly like a day forty years ago. About the same distance from where he stood, beyond the grove which he saw in front of him, was the settlement of Narasimheswara.

As he was thinking of these things, Sariputra saw some people from the village coming towards him. Behind them were a few boys leading cattle. Seeing a man in ochre robes, the elderly people folded their hands to him. Noticing what the elders did, the youngsters also folded their hands. When they had passed, Sariputra saw that the courtesy was not because of any of the elderly people recognising him, but merely because of his status as a man of religion. When he passed the grove, he would see the village. The house in the middle of the village was the one that had been his. What had happened to that home now and to its people? Vedavati should now be an aged lady. Sariputra had somehow the conviction that she was still alive. He found it impossible to think of her as dead. His father should have died by this time. And that daughter? Was she a household woman and was she happy? When he asked himself what might be the condition of his daughter

Sariputra, for just half a moment, became again Narasimha Sarma, and something in him twitched. The next moment he remembered the consolation that the great teacher had administered to the smaller Goutami when she had lost her child: you can revive the dead if you can go to some household in which there has been no death at any time and bring a grain of pepper and put it into the mouth of the corpse. Only, there is no such pepper. Thinking of that incident, Sariputra crossed the grove and reached the other side and saw the village. It gave him joy to see the old place; and seeing it and feeling the joy, he walked on to a large *peepul* tree in front of its gate. He wished to rest there for a little while and sat on the platform built round the tree; and asked himself whether he might go to the village first, or go to the river and bathe first and then enter the village.

Sariputra's mind experienced no great agitation from the fact of his having come to his village or to his people, or from the recollection of his boyhood's years. All the story of his early days passed in front of his mind as in a play; and the incidents seemed to form a well-connected whole, each bit in its proper place. He revived it with an even mind and felt that he was right in having

been dissatisfied with his life then, and in having gone in search of the teacher of whom he had heard; and he felt convinced that it had all occurred by the grace of God. Sariputra had become a Buddhist but he did not give up belief in God. He had seen God with his own eyes.* How could he say that there was no God? How could he, who still saw his teacher before his mind's eye, feel any doubt about the existence of God? The Buddha had said several times: "Do not call a thing you do not know God. God to each man is that which satisfies the highest impulses of his nature. There is divinity which can be seen in the body; there is divinity which cannot be seen in the body. No one who is in a body can see God as if he were not encumbered with the body. A man gets the thought of God when he is in contact with God. If the thought of God comes to your mind do not drive it away. Take that which you feel is God and worship It. Some people can become aware of a principle which is devoid of qualities. The principle is God to them. To others a principle that is devoid of qualities is incapable of realisation. Such people should accept a principle that has qualities." Discussing the idea of God on one such occasion, Sariputra had said to the teacher: "Master, I wish to ask

you a question. You must be gracious and answer me." The teacher said: "I never refuse to answer any question you ask." Sariputra had said: "Are you the ninth incarnation of God? I pray you, tell me."

"You come from the brahmins of the land of the Narmada. Cannot you get over the belief of your caste?"

"That belief had weakened some years ago; after seeing you, it has become strengthened."

"I suppose you will not be happy until you can call something God."

"That is so."

"You must have a God?"

"Yes."

"It is possible for you to think of me as God and revere me?"

"Just so."

"Then, think of me as you like and revere."

Sariputra had said, "Great is my fortune," and fell prostrate before him. On another occasion the teacher said: "The day is past when men would have accepted God if He came to earth and said He was God. The day will come when men will not accept the claim of any man to be even a

teacher. In truth, man is God. Each person is a piece of God. As knowledge grows, God will be seen in the heart." What doubt was there after this that the Buddha was God? Sariputra felt that all the Vedic learning through which he ground his way in early life reached its fruition in the service of his master.

Reverting in this way at every step to thoughts of the relationship between himself and his master, Sariputra sat in peace under the *peepul* tree. Some people from the village were going to the river. Sariputra tried to make out if any of them was a person he had known. He could recognise none. Some women were going with vessels for cleaning and their children were running behind him. Sariputra tried to make out if any of them looked like his daughter. He knew that, having seen her last when she was three years old, he could not, now forty years later, recognise her features. Yet the impulse to recognise persisted. This is a peculiarity of our minds. It is because of this that man, never having seen God in this life, feels yet confident that he will know Him when he sees Him: quite as confident as if he had seen God. What is more, this confidence seems to be justified. For the mind seems to have powers of which

it is normally not aware. As Sariputra watched the people on the way, two women passed from the direction of the river towards the village. One of them said to the other: "An ascetic is sitting there. I wish someone would go and ask him to come into the town." The other said: "He may be a Buddhist. Who is going to invite him?" The whole country now knew of Buddha and his order of ascetics. The talk of the women, as proving this, gave Sariputra pleasure more than it hurt him as casting a slur on Buddhists. A girl followed the two women. Seeing the ascetic, she came near him but, unwilling to show that she was interested in him, she pretended to be picking up some fruits of the *peepul* tree. Her real interest was, however, in the stranger and she looked at him at every step, turning away if he looked at her. Sariputra had with him some fruit which he had been given in his place of halt the previous night. He had not used the fruit and had kept it thinking that he might give it to some children in the morning. He thought he could give it to this child and looked at the girl, intending to call her. This time the child faced him and looked steadily at him, and Sariputra thought that her face looked like his daughter's face. Then he said to himself that

this must be an illusion. Yet, again, he thought: "It is nothing very wonderful if it should be a real resemblance." Then he asked her: "Little one, what is your name?"

"Veda," said the child.

"Would you like to have this fruit? You may have it if you like."

"Give it to me, let us see," said the girl and, as if she were challenging him, she walked up to him and stretched out her hand. Sariputra gave her the fruit. The child took it and looking steadily at him said: "What is your name?"

"Sariputra."

"My grandfather is just like you wearing coloured robes. He is an ascetic."

"Have you seen him?"

"No."

"Where is he?"

"I do not know."

"What is your mother's name?"

"Mamma."

"What is your grandmother's name?"

"The lady Vedamma."

The elder ladies had gone some distance. One of them now turned back and called out to

the child : " Oh, you chatter-box, come along." The child called out : " I am coming," and stayed. The elders went on. Sariputra thought to himself that this child must be his daughter's child. That was how her face struck him as familiar. He said to her : " Vedu, little mother, I shall show you your grandfather. Take me to your house." The child said : " Come on," and started to lead him. Sariputra took the girl up and said : " Shall I show you your house ? " and, talking of twenty things to her, he entered the village.

The same street ; and the same temple ; and near there, the same house. In front of the house was a middle-aged woman drawing designs on the ground. Seeing a stranger coming up with the child, she stopped drawing the creepers and stood still and looked at him.

Sariputra saw her and felt certain it was his daughter. He intended to tell her quietly who he was so as not to startle her. So he put the child down and said to the lady : " Is this your child, mother ? "

" Yes."

" I am an ascetic of the name Sariputra. I was born and brought up in this village. They used to call me in the old days Narasimha Sarma."

Kumudini was not so much listening to him as looking at him. She somehow took in the fact that it was her father, and, before he concluded his words, ran into the house crying out to her mother: "Mother, father has come." Hearing the shout an old lady came from within. She should have heard the shout without making out what was said. So she was saying: "What happened, child? Did the little one hurt herself?" Coming to the hall she understood that it was not the child falling, but something else. Kumudini said to her twice: "Father has come. He is an ascetic. See, he is standing there." The daughter spoke a little loud. Obviously, Vedavati had become hard of hearing because of age. When the daughter repeated her words, she understood what she meant.

Immediately, she turned her face away and said to the daughter: "Is he an ascetic, your father?" she said.

"Yes, it is father; that is what I am telling you. He gave his name. He is an ascetic."

"Did he tell his name? And has he become an ascetic? Then he ought not to come home and I ought not to see him. Go you and attend to him. He is well and has come back. So far

so good. But it is not given to me to look at him."

Sariputra heard these words and said: "I am a follower of the Buddha. Our ascetics do not observe the rules of the Vedic ascetics. There is no objection to your seeing me or speaking to me."

Vedavati did not follow him clearly. "What does he say?" she said to her daughter. Kumudini explained. Vedavati understood and said: "Does he say so? So, I can see him?" and walked to her husband and looked at him without hesitation and said: "So you have come back to see your daughter. That itself is a satisfaction to me." She then touched his feet and touched her eyes and, seeming suddenly to lose all strength from her limbs, she sat down where she was. A moment later, she seemed to have recovered strength and said: "Kumuda, place a plank in the hall for your father to sit on. Veda, my little one, come and do obeisance to your grandfather."

That day the household was full of joy and enthusiasm. Within a quarter of an hour nearly the whole village seemed to have come and gathered round Sariputra. Several persons who had known Narasimha in the past recognised the ascetic and spoke to him affectionately as if

the separation for so many years did not matter. Some of them asked why he had given up caste ; others, why he had become an ascetic. Some others talked over the times they had spent together when young. Sariputra spoke to all with perfect ease and good temper and remembered the old days and laughed with them and spoke to all with affection and consideration. Many of the young people discovered that the Buddhist ascetic was no worse than an orthodox one and made prostrations to him and asked for blessings. It was late in the afternoon when this ceremony of reception concluded.

Sariputra's father had died some six or seven years previously. He had married the granddaughter and had asked the young man to stay with him. Kumudini was unwilling to go away, leaving her grandfather and mother, with no one to take care of them. Kumudini's parents-in-law, however, were particular that their son should be with them. So, Kumudini and her husband had to spend most of the time apart. She would stay in turn with her mother for some months and with her husband other months. She had borne three children but Veda was the only one now surviving. Sariputra's father never quite gave up the hope that his son might come back. He believed that

he would come back when he was alive. "I wish he would come back soon," the old man would say at times. "I can then leave this household in his care and go my way. I do not know why he is staying away." Vedavati after some years said: "Please do not worry yourself on my account or my daughter's. Think of your spiritual welfare and be at peace. Think of me as your son. When you have to leave the body, I shall see to it that all the ceremonies are properly conducted. You are troubled because I shall be left alone. Why, I could go and stay with Kumuda in her house. What is the need for anxiety about me?" The old man once said to his daughter-in-law: "You were born a woman but your courage is more than man's. What a fine name you have brought to our house! May you be ever fortunate! God will reward your devotion to your husband in his absence in this life, with long and happy years with him in the next." He called his grand-daughter and said: "Child, whatever your parents-in-law may say, do not leave your mother alone. She will feel lonely and unhappy." Not long after this he closed his eyes. Sariputra heard all the story. When the gathering which had come to see him had dispersed, he went to the river and finished his bath and prayer and

came to the house. His wife and daughter said that he should take his food with them. Sariputra said: "Ordinarily, I should go with my begging bowl and take the food that any one gives. Today I shall take the food that you give. It is the same to me who gives it." The next day, however, he stayed in one of the *mantaps* opposite the river and got his food by begging. Thus he spent some time seeking for guidance as to what he should do next.

Sariputra's name became well-known in all that part of the country. He preached to many audiences in the country around, telling them that the religion of the Buddha was not a different religion, that it was merely the religion of the Vedas made easy so that all could follow it, and that the Buddha was an incarnation of God come to earth for simplifying the Vedic religion. The prejudice that people had felt about Buddhism previously wore away in consequence of Sariputra's preaching and people loved the religion of the Buddha. Some more ascetics of his order, hearing that Sariputra was here, came and joined him. Kumudini's husband about that time was able to come and stay with Kumudini in her village. He and his wife came frequently to Sariputra's temporary abode and experienced the joy of

serving a great and good man who was their father.

When two years had passed in this way, Vedavati said to Sariputra : " As it seems permissible for me to become a bhikshuni in your order, make me one and permit me, when you leave this place, to go with you." Sariputra agreed and made her a sister of the order. This was a signal for bhikshunis of the order coming from elsewhere and settling in that place and some women of the locality also joining the sisterhood. About this time Ananda sent word to Sariputra to say that the Pulinda kings of the land of the Godavari had invited him to form a settlement of the Buddhist order in their territory and that he was going to organise a *vihara* for five hundred monks near a place known as Ajanta. Ananda begged Sariputra to go and help him in this enterprise. Sariputra communicated this to the people of his village and took their permission and, leaving his daughter and son-in-law and grand-daughter in his old village, proceeded with Vedavati and his fellow ascetics towards the Karnataka country.

THE LAST DAY OF A POET'S LIFE

When he had completed the second part of "Faust," Goethe said to Eckermann that he had finished whatever work he had to do and that the days still left to him were a present made by life. He lived for some months after this and, though advanced in years, in good enough health. But winter came, and, as his vitality was low, he found it hard to stand its rigour. He managed, however, somehow, to tide over almost the whole season but one day, at the close of it, caught a sudden chill and took to bed. He got fever and lay ill for three days; looked as if he improved one day and lay in a stupor almost the whole of the next day; and then closed his life.

On that last day he did not suffer from any pain or distress due to his illness. Though very weak, he did not realise that his life was coming to an end. A little before going into the stupor the poet told the doctor who came to look at him that he would be all right in a day or two. He spoke with consideration to the servant who was attending on him. He looked with affection and gratitude at the servant-maid who smoothed his bed for him. When his daughter-in-law who was in charge of the house approached him, he smiled

to her and spoke of the affairs of the household and talked reassuringly of his own health. Soon after this, the faculties of that life which had lived through eighty years seemed to slacken and his mind was covered by a soft stupor. The poet felt no inclination to keep his eyes open. Yet, though the eyes were closed, he could not be said to be asleep. The poet, in this condition, lived his eighty years of life over again in one day. Many of the incidents of that life passed before his mind as in a scroll and he experienced the rare pleasure of looking as a spectator on himself living the old life again, with a curious mixture of detachment and interest.

What a good mother that was of his! And that father! He too was good; but he was rather obstinate, expecting that his son should grow as he wished, and distressed himself and that son. By the affection of the mother the troubles of his boyhood had been made tolerable. And that grandmother of his! How great was her affection! She had given him those puppets with which as a boy he had played the livelong day. What great pleasure he had derived from those puppets! Later in life he had derived extraordinary pleasure from plays, writing them, acting them, getting them acted. How did it happen

that these puppets came into his life so early? Did his interest in plays arise from the fact of his having been given these puppets so young? Or, did the grandmother give him the puppets, knowing that he had a taste for plays? Or, was it mere chance that she gave the puppets and he had the taste and the one fitted the other? Anyhow those puppets that he got as a boy meant a great deal in his development. This was only one of the many instances of good fortune that had come to him unplanned in life. That town in which he was born was a fine town; if given the option that is where he would have asked to be born. The household in which he was born was also good. His later life had been full of the same good fortune. It is true that it was not such good fortune as allowed him to sit idle and live a life of thoughtless pleasure. Throughout his life he had had to strive and labour. And yet that labour had brought joy; it had brought success; it had brought fame. Even pleasure had not been denied. On the whole he had been fortunate in life...

And that sister of his, poor thing, her life had not been as fortunate...

And the girl. He had thought of her as a lover. She too had pretended that she thought of him as one. But how could he, so many years

younger than she, a youth just budding into life, be her equal? But woman is ever so. From the time the male is a youth, ignorant of life, to the time that he is an old man who has known all life, he can at no time say that he knows the nature of woman. For himself, he was always susceptible to the presence of women. When he went to the University for study, he fell in with the daughter of the proprietor of that hotel. He and she felt great affection for each other. He thought that he might marry the young woman. It looked as if she would have agreed also. But he was not prepared to get entangled by marriage and that affair fell through. Then he met another young woman. Every time he looked at her, he felt love surging up in his being, but there were difficulties to a marriage. But more than any difficulty was his reluctance to get fixed. Then in another University. While living there, he went to a village and made the acquaintance of a cultured yet unsophisticated household. What excellent and simple people they were! How excellent and simple a girl was Frederike. Her make-up was that of a grape. There was nothing in it which had to be thrown away. It was a nature capable only of a complete surrender of self. With the intention to marry, he had carried

familiarities with her to an improper length. When he abandoned her and came away she was grieved to the point of death. It was fortunate that she did not die in fact. Years later, she married another man, bore him children and lived a household life and was fairly happy. He was glad to have seen this with his own eyes, because it reduced the edge of his repentance for the way he had conducted himself with her.....

In all the places where he stayed, what excellent friends he got! By years, by experience and by knowledge, they were much his seniors; and yet they treated him with the affection of equals. He, no doubt, showed them some consideration as seniors; and yet all the time his attitude was that of an equal. This was his peculiarity. He could not talk to these people as a smaller man. He was self-confident, even conceited, but those elder people overlooked this trait in his character and behaved in a most friendly way. They listened to his reading of his work willingly and with pleasure, and expressed hearty appreciation of what he did, and encouraged him to do more. Great lives those, and they acted in a great way...

How many are the tendencies in a man which would lead him astray! How many again are the tendencies which would save him from

these other tendencies ! His life was the battle-field of these two kinds of tendencies. He felt a great love for her. She was betrothed to Kestner. Kestner was a good fellow. He himself, though he showed his love to the young woman, did nothing improper. Yet that love was a pain as of hell. And that other young woman ! He used to visit the household, talk as a friend, and laugh and play. He did not, however, speak of marriage. Another man came and spoke of marriage and settled it. What, afterwards, was his position there ? Yet, he was not willing to give up contacts. Naturally, this ended in a misunderstanding with the *fiancee*. A man like him had no place with these people who called themselves respectable. The other group which called itself free went to the other extreme. Caroline was the *fiancee* of his friend ; she was very shortly to marry that friend ; and yet, how free was her behaviour to himself ! If he went into a room in which she was present along with ten other people, she would get up and approach him and, right in the presence of all, embrace him and kiss him. This gave him pleasure then and yet he sometimes asked himself whether she was right. The friend, of course, was offended with his *fiancee* who behaved in this way and with himself for allowing

such behaviour. Yet, that day when they were caught in a storm, and they ran in the wood and had to spend the time under a tree ! What joy they had, he singing and his companions listening ! What exquisitely happy days they were !....

-He put his experience into a book and published it and it brought him such fame ! Even later, this is what had happened to him. He stated in books the experiences through which he passed and these brought him name and fame and an ever-widening circle of readers and friends. He had derived joy in writing and the world had derived joy in reading. How many thousands had read his works and felt delighted ! And among them the young Grand-Duke, who later made him his prime minister. Later in life, Napoleon ; and then Byron, Scott, Carlyle. Ah, these English are a great people for admiring what is great in literature. They are privileged to own such great men as these three. If they were not great and privileged, how could they have Shakespeare among them ?

Goethe's stupor deepened ; his thought ceased to flow as thought and congealed into dream. The poet saw, sitting opposite to him, a person whom he did not know. It was an Englishman. His face was long and so was the nose ; and the eyes were

marvellously clear and bright. The poet said to him: "You are Shakespeare." The stranger said: "Yes." The poet lifted up his hand to write the name of Shakespeare and shaped the letter "W" on his coverlet. He felt no inclination to say anything to Shakespeare or to hear him say anything. Just to be lying down in the presence of the great man gave him joy. He lay in peace and looked at the face of the stranger for a long time as if he could not see enough of him.

As he lay thus, his sleep deepened, and he passed beyond the plane of dreams. The face of Shakespeare left him in this sleep. As he came out of the sleep after some time and reached the plane of dreams again, he saw, sitting in the old place, a person from a strange land. The poet saw this new face and was greatly intrigued by its unusual look. "Who are you?" he asked. The stranger did not answer. "Are you Hafiz?" asked the poet. "Oh, what a mistake I am making! You are Kalidasa." The stranger did not speak but smiled and indicated assent. The poor man did not know German. How could he reply? Besides, he could not have understood the question either. But what wonderful eyes this man had! Shakespeare's eyes could look at the world, detail after detail, without fatigue or disgust. This look, on the

contrary, seemed as if between once opening and once shutting the eye, it would swallow up the whole of the world. These eastern people are made this way. They think that without labour they will get all the results that come from labour. From one point of view this is true enough; and yet from another, could anything be more absurd? It was for this reason that, in their world, thought had reached the farthest limits, leaving life poor as ever. The poet at this moment looked again at his colleague from the eastern land. That figure sat still as before and showing no change in expression. The poet said: "I have written in praise of your Shakuntala, do you know?" The stranger showed by his expression that he was aware of the praise. The poet said: "From the flowers of spring to the fruit of autumn, from the innocence of childhood to the wisdom of age, from the travail of earth to the bliss of heaven, would you have everything put into one word? I name Shakuntala and all of this is said. That is how I praised your play." The stranger smiled a little and showed that he was pleased by these words of affection. Suddenly, as the poet was still looking at the figure, it seemed to be another person. The poet asked, "Who are you?" That figure too was silent. "You are

Hafiz," said the poet. "Yes," the figure seemed to say by its expression. "Hafiz, Hafiz," said the poet to himself, and sank into thought.

Josephine Willemer it was who made him write the poems of the Divan in the manner of Hafiz. She herself wrote beautiful poetry, assuming the name Zuleika. What a woman she was! How clever, how able, how good! She and her husband and the poet had spent eight days together in that riverside town in such indescribable happiness. Josephine was not what you would call a beauty. Yet she had the peculiar power of winning your heart in a way that few women could who might have beauty. Winning your heart; winning, really, his heart. Eight days they had stayed in the hotel by the river, he and the Willemer couple, and he had enjoyed on earth a bliss that seemed to be of heaven. And yet he was not free from all the desires of earth. She too seemed to have felt something like them. That moonlight night when he and she sat together by themselves on the roof of their hotel, she, all on a sudden, said to him: "Goethe, it is not safe for you and me to be together hereafter." He had looked at her and said: "You are right." Immediately the two had come down from the roof and gone to their rooms. The next morning

he got up early and ran away without telling any one. The friend who trusted in him should not be betrayed. A young woman who had come to him trustfully and affectionately should not be ruined. Even if she was willing, she should not be led to what she thought was not right. If you thought a thing not right, it was not right. He knew not what power it was, but some power, at that moment, led his life to a good end.

It is in such cases that what we call morality seems worthwhile. It is at such moments that man realises that life is not given to us for getting pleasure, but living rightly. Life is like a chariot. We are each sitting in a separate chariot which is drawn by a group of horses. The ground is not even. It is full of pits and ups and downs, a hillock here and a piece of water there, and between them is the way wandering in and out. We, who sit in the chariot, are being dragged along incessantly by the horses, without the power to stop them, between the pits, on the margin of the waters, at the bottom of the hillocks. The utmost we can do is to prevent the horses from going into the pits or into the waters, and make them go on the way we see. We do not know in what direction the way is good or will lead to happiness. We have not the time to stop and think which

way might be better. At the moment, among the ways that lie ahead, we have to take one. To keep on a way and avoid the hillock, pit or water is the great achievement. So man has to progress on the paths of this life and complete his measure of days.

He had lived his days, driving the chariot of his life over paths beset with so many dangers. How many of his companions had been less fortunate than he and driven into the pits or against the hill-sides! If the Grand-Duke had not come to him and made him his minister, to what dangers might not his own life have progressed? And if he had not been with the Grand-Duke, to what harms might not that man's life have grown? He had kept him under some kind of control, playing with him in hours of play and working with him in hours of work. This brought some discipline into both their lives and resulted in some good to the Duke's territory. Yet the life they led as wealthy youths was not entirely devoid of harm to the population. The Grand-Duke was so fond of hunting and boisterous mirth; his life was so expensive. Was there no better use for the money which the Duchy levied from its population? Merely because this man was Grand-Duke, should he have spent so much on pleasure?

The Grand-Duke wanted to hunt ; so there should be wild animals. In order that wild animals might grow there should be forest. And because land was wanted for growing a forest, there was less land which could be ploughed. What should happen to the men who needed land to plough and grow their food ? The Grand-Duke would bring up a wild animal for hunting. That wild animal would grow upon the cattle of the population. The Grand-Duke did not realise this. How should a man living in comfort know the hardships of poverty ? He had seen this callousness of the Duke for a long time and felt vexed ; and one day in Ilmenau he did a thing that taught the Duke a lesson. When the Duke and his companions had finished a hunt and were resting, he walked up to the Duke disguised as a peasant and repeated a poem he had composed explaining the hard life of the population. He was harsh in the poem ; yet the Duke bore the harshness, realising that his minister had done this for his good. Altogether, the Duke was an excellent man. Though much younger than the poet, he had died years ago. He could have lived some more years and died after the poet ; but that life had been lived fast, and closed early. Poor man, when all was said and done, it had to be admitted that he had kept before him

always the welfare of his subjects. Men born to such comforts as he rarely do so much good and so little harm.

How happy Frau von Stein had made those days for the poet ! Some people thought that it was wrong for him to have got into such relations with the Frau. But if a man should do in life only what these people who talk of right and wrong permit, no one can get on. These people are constantly talking of morality, but if life becomes an empty wilderness, not one of them will come and say a word of comfort or cheer. If that poor woman had been happy with her husband, he would not have thought of going near her. That husband did not care what the wife did. If she, for amusement, spent a little time with a stranger and they grew to like each other, why should these people have an objection that her husband did not feel? Yet this is what we call society. How clever was Frau von Stein and how well had his and her mind blended ! One night when their acquaintance was new and before their friendship had ripened, he felt a strong desire to go and see her. He started from the house and went as far as hers. But it was late in the night and he thought it improper to walk in. So, he desisted from going in and

prowled round about the house to have the satisfaction of being near his beloved. He went over one street and turned into another and, there in front of him, whom should he see but Frau von Stein? "Goethe," she called. He answered "Yes," and she asked him why he was there. He told her. She said: "What foolishness! If you wished so much to come, why should you have stayed out? It might be late. How does it matter?" His desire had reached her mind as though it had been communicated by a message sent by letter or by messenger. She had left her house not knowing why, and had met him in the street. This was one instance out of many which showed how their minds and hearts were in unison. Between life and life there is a natural affinity. To ignore the affinity is the way to unhappiness; to act in concert with that affinity is the way to real happiness. The man and woman between whom there is this affinity experience love without becoming husband and wife. A man and a woman who have not this affinity may become husband and wife and strive ever so hard, but cannot experience true love. Frau von Stein, towards the end of their friendship, expected from him a devotion that was impossible in the circumstances. She grew old,

but expected that this younger man should be her servant for ever. How could this be? So there was some misunderstanding between them and she spoke in sneers and sarcasm and frowned and fretted. She in short, treated him worse than she might have done had she been his wife and he her husband.

It is ever thus in this relationship: marriage or love—it is all the same. Christiane had borne him his son. Twenty years she lived with him without marriage. When Napoleon's soldiers were billeted in his house, they treated her with disrespect because she was not married. To save her from further ill-treatment of this kind, he married her and made her his wife. Before this formal function took place, that poor woman, though virtually his wife, was not entitled to the protection that society reserves for the married. That son also could not be treated as a legitimate son. What is one to say to all this senselessness of society? In these matters Schiller had very clear and definite notions. He and Schiller differed very greatly in opinion in such cases.

Schiller was a very able man; very courageous, very sensible. His self-respect was extraordinary. Years ago, when he was in need of some money, the Grand-Duke offered to give

it to him. Schiller would not take it. He said that he would write plays and earn the money. Even when his health did not permit hard work, he laboured to earn what he needed and shortened his life. This he called living in independence. He himself never approved of such action ; yet he saw that even the error of which Schiller was guilty in this matter proceeded from nobility of soul. Whatever might be the external form of Schiller's attitude in life, there never was any doubt about the goodness of that man's outlook and impulses. He kept his life under constant control. He did not know weak desires, or, if he knew them, he never allowed them play. Thus he grew in greatness from moment to moment and from day to day. Between one meeting and the next, one could see that the man had grown. In every little thing he did, you could see marks of his greatness. His conduct and his talk ! From the point of view of money his position was ordinary ; yet this man conducted himself with Grand-Dukes and Princes as though he were their equal or their superior. He was a very great man. He died far too early. Yet he left indelible marks of his life on the history of his people. How greatly had Schiller's love filled his own life ! To how many good things had it encouraged

him! If Schiller had not come into his life, one, or even two, of the seasons of spring in his creative life might not have occurred. Schiller not only wrote great work himself: he was the cause of his friend's writing great work. Schiller's was a rare life, a great life.

There was no room for envy in that man's nature. Some foolish people wasted their time and tried to create mischief by comparing him and Schiller. Another man might have allowed this kind of talk to spoil their relationship, but Schiller was so true to friendship that any unpleasantness which other people might have hoped would arise between them was impossible. When people talked disparagingly of Goethe, Schiller would tell them that they did not know the man. If any one spoke in appreciation of Goethe, he would feel delighted and communicate the pleasure to his friend. When men said, "Goethe is not one man but twenty," or "Goethe is the Emperor of the literary world of Europe," Schiller felt proud and happy. He could not have felt happier if these words had been said about himself. He was far happier when a friend was praised.

What a friend he was! What a friend was Humboldt! And what a friend Zelter! How abundantly had affection come to him, and from

how many quarters, and wrapped him round and nourished him !

Schiller's plays received great appreciation from the people. They brought a great name to the Weimar theatre.

This theatre in Weimar, what days of joy had it given him !

Corona had great beauty. Minna also had very great beauty. Oh beauty, oh beauty !

In this state of half sleep the poet now saw moving before him a face of great beauty. It was a woman's face. Whose was it ? The natural intelligence of Frau von Stein seemed to be there. The way that head stood on that neck was the way of Corona. That regularity of features was that of Minna. The ears were like the ears of Frederike, small, shapely. How pretty was the nose, how pretty the cheek ! And the lips ; and what a smile on those lips ! And the eyebrows : who drew their line ? O beauty ; o smile ; whose is this smile ?

Seeing this beautiful face in front of him, Goethe spoke in sleep. The servant came near to see if his master was waking up. The poet did not come out of his stupor. He was talking to himself. Hearing the father-in-law's voice,

Ottillie came in from the next room to see if he wanted anything. Finding that Goethe was still in sleep, she moved quietly away.

The figure which had taken shape in front of the poet slowly became visible up to the bust. The poet dwelt on the features and delighted in the vision. What shoulders! what a bust! And, altogether, what a wonderful shape! The beauty for which the poet had felt hungry in his youth had appeared before him in life, a little in one woman and a little in another, some features here and some features there, and had attracted him. In the court of the Grand-Duke, beauty of many types had passed close to him. He could know it sometimes, but most times not. With a longing for experience unsatisfied in the conventional circles of Weimar, he had fled to Rome for freedom. There, in a warmer climate, with a freer people, he had sought the warmth of woman's companionship; sought it and found it. The women of Italy were like the marble statues which her great sculptors had made in the past brought to life and moving. He had seen them and touched them and held them in his arms. Experience did not quench desire. After some time of this holiday he had returned to Weimar. The beauty which he had seen in all those women

seemed to have gathered into this face now before him. There was something here beside, that he had seen in no woman. What was this unseen grace that made this face unique? And also whose was the face? "Who are you? Who? Helena, beloved of Paris, whose beauty was greater than any to be found in all the worlds? O, you are not woman only, you are man too! Who are you? Who?"

The poet could not make out what beauty this was that seemed both man and woman. He ceased to question and looked on it peacefully, merely begging it to stand and not disappear. That face stood steady before his vision. Looking on it, the poet felt endless satisfaction. He felt no desire to touch it or hold it. It seemed that this beauty which touched the sense of vision was able through it to satisfy the cravings of the other senses. Seeing was enough; no knowing was required. Looking steadily at the face with all the strength of desire, the poet realised all on a sudden that this was a face he had seen before. This was the face which he had seen in the heart of his dreams in early youth. It had come to him in those dreams and disappeared, and he had sought it in all the world. He saw bits of it here and there, but the greater part he had not seen, and this had left him unsatisfied. If one craving

was satisfied, another was left hungry and he had got up from life's banquet with hunger unappeased. Like a man who hears the perfect form or movement of a tune and wanders in elaboration trying to get the spirit of it, and failing to get it anywhere, returns to the perfect form in the simplicity of the conclusion, the poet, after long wandering in pursuit of the beauty of his dream, was returning to see it again in this dream. "O, it is you," he said, muttering in his stupor: "I see, I see."

Ottilie came in again. The poet came out of his stupor and opened his eyes. Ottilie was standing beside the bed and looking at him anxiously. The sight of her touched the poet's heart. He looked on her affectionately and smiled a little. Ottilie smiled in response, but her heart was troubled. Would the old man live some time longer or would he leave her and go? She had not seen much happiness in her married life. Her husband had not been good to her. But this old father of his had made her life bearable by a kindly word or a tender look and the sympathy he showed on his face at most times. Ottilie was a little girl when Goethe first saw her. He had played with her as a child and, as she belonged to a household with which he was on terms of great friendship and she was a bright creature, he had

taken her to be his son's wife. But that son had taken to wrong ways and made her life bitter. The poet had seen that the young woman was unhappy and felt it his duty to treat her with consideration and make her life bearable. The old man's heart now melted in pity to see his daughter-in-law covering her anxiety with a smile. Even before she became his son's wife she had been to him as a daughter. Today again she transcended the relationship of daughter-in-law and became something nearer. She was not a beauty, though not devoid of good looks. To the poet's eyes looking at her in tenderness and pity, the good looks of Otilie, without being great beauty, seemed infinitely attractive as a daughter's. Half jocosely he said to her, "Give me your little hand;" and when she put out her hand, he kissed it, fondling it as he might a child's. This exertion seemed to be more than he could stand and the next moment he went into stupor again.

Was it again that face? No, it was Otilie's face. No it was his daughter's face. No; what daughter had he? He had only a son. This face was his daughter-in-law's face. No, it was that other face.....

He had looked for pleasure in experience, and had found a little of it there. He had held

on to the right path, denying himself at times. Though, at the moment, denial had been hard and seemed to bring no pleasure, he had thereafter, in consequence of such self-control, received satisfaction which was ten times as worthwhile as the joy of experience. Contentment was bliss and bliss contentment. Should man look for bliss in experience or in self-denial? Which was better? Renunciation or possession? Discipline or indulgence? Shall a man, on the ground of natural affinity, live as a lover with a woman, or should he, on the ground of right and morality, lead a chaste life?

The poet turned this question over in his mind for some time. The review of his life which his mind had made involuntarily had fatigued him. The question, "What is right, this or that, this or that," merely turned over in the mind without any progress in thought. Who is to tell which is right? With the knowledge that man has, it is difficult to say which is right. With more light one would be in a better position to decide. More light is needed. With this thought, the poet turned over to the other side. The bedstead creaked a little. This brought the attendant to the poet's side. It might have been because of the attendant's steps, the poet opened

his eyes. He felt that there was not enough light in the room and said: "Open the window; let in more light." The attendant went to the window and opened the shutter a little and returned to the bed. By this time the poet's breath had begun to fail and an ominous sound was heard from his throat. The attendant ran in to call the daughter-in-law and returned quickly. Ottilie followed almost immediately, but by the time she arrived, the poet's soul had left the body and winged its way to light.

A LETTER OF THE ABBE DUBOIS

Some letters written by the Abbe Dubois, author of the book "Hindu Manners and Customs" are found, it seems, in the archives of the Neuve Sorbonne University in France. A friend of our Venkat Rao's sent a copy of one of them to us some time ago. The following is a free rendering of the letter.

12th December, 1800

Sreerangapatam.

To

The Reverend Bishop Buoisney

Having with your Grace's permission started on my journey for this place where I have to execute my mission for Christ at the instance of the East India Company, I reached here some days ago and am writing this letter from my new station. I had seen the country around this place previously, but had not seen this particular town and this beautiful island on which it is situated. The island is, of course, in the river Cauvery. To speak of a river island is to suggest a small affair some furlongs square at the most. But this island is no such little show. It is really an attractive island round which the Cauvery flows in two branches. It is some four or five square

miles in area. Standing upon the ridge in the island you see, flowing in the valley on either side, a stream of respectable dimensions. You would, however, hardly feel inclined to say that you were on an island. The Cauvery flows from the hill country of Coorg and is a great river by the time it reaches this part of Mysore. Here it meets this eminence which forms the island of Sreerangapatam and breaks into two branches. Each branch is a full and respectable-sized river. Flowing apart for some three miles at a distance of over a mile at the widest, the branches join again. The river retains the name throughout and the branches are also called by the same name.

This is a peculiarity in this great river. Just as it branches at this point and goes around an island and joins again, so further down at two other points it forms islands. I do not know that this is so but the people here say so. As is usual with the people of this country, they have made these islands holy places. On each of these islands they have built a temple of the God whom they call Ranganatha and made a story that Cauvery is the wife of Ranganatha and that Ranganatha is sleeping between her arms. It is quite common for this population to do this kind of thing. Poetically speaking, such talk is

pretty enough. But this prettiness of conception has done harm in the life of these people. To all the population around here, particularly to the population which works in these temples, constant association with this poetic conception has made love between male and female the one thing above all others which matters in life. As if this were not enough, the place where the two branches reunite is called in their language 'sangama'. If you ask them what the word means they will tell you it means 'flowing together'. But, ordinarily, they use the word to mean the union of male and female.

However this may be, this island tract, with a stream on this side and a stream on the other ; a large town between, with a fort and a temple and a mosque ; with cultivated land and garden close to the water and the cocoanut trees growing luxuriant as if to touch the sky ; with the pleasure garden of the King planned and trimmed like any artificial garden with great taste ; the woods which have grown round the camp of the King's army further on ; with, finally, on the farther end, the mosque built over the graves of Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan, set in the midst of another well-planned garden and with structures in beautiful black stone ; this island tract, I say, is a store-

house of things that delight the eye and heart. There is nothing to complain of about the place.

As it is only a short time since Tipu Sultan died, and as the Hindu prince to whom the kingdom has been restored is still a boy and the administration is in the hands of his prime minister who is acting as regent, life in Sreerangapatam has not yet become brisk. The only faces here that show any briskness are the faces of the English soldiers and their commanders. The people of this country employed in the army which works under the command of the English officers also show a fair amount of wakefulness. But, altogether, one should admit that the people of this country are by nature lazy. You know this very well. If you tell them anything they take five minutes to understand you. Dewan Purniah is supposed to be an exceedingly intelligent man among them. Even he cannot walk about as our people do. He talks very deliberately and, as if talking itself were difficult, uses very few words. But one thing must be said about this man. Nothing has been left undone as a result of this slowness. The men around him are in fear of his disapproval and feel that safety lies in carrying out his instructions. When I came here I spoke to this Dewan about the conveniences

I should require. Most of it has already been provided and the rest will be provided within a day or two. I am sure that everything that I require for spreading the evangel of the Saviour of Humanity and turning the hearts of these people now walking in darkness towards the light will soon be mine.

One thing, however, we should keep in mind in this context. As in other matters, so in matters relating to religion, this population moves slow. Tell them that their house is burning and they are in no hurry to run to save it. They will first ask you: "How do you know that my house has taken fire?" After that they will stand and think where the water to be brought for putting down the fire is. Thereafter they will think of getting some people to assist them. By that time they will say: "If it is written on my forehead that my house should burn, what is the use of hurrying to save it? God's will be done." In this mood they will go slowly towards their house, and pour a handful of water upon a fire which has spread to uncontrollable proportions. Or, if this is not the exact description of what they will do when their house is on fire, it is perfectly accurate with regard to their attitude to something far more precious than a house. You tell them:

"O, sinful ones, your souls are burning, save them." They ask: "What is this sin and where could it come from?" You tell the story of Adam and Eve: they do not believe it. They believe in some trash. Really, these people have not the faculty for believing the right thing.

In particular, the brahmins who are the priests of this population hear what we say and go away laughing. Going down to eternal hell, these foolish and blind leaders of the blind hug their ignorance as great knowledge and laugh blasphemously on the brink of endless death. They know not that they are prancing on the margin of the abysmal inferno. We have made a mistake in thinking of convincing these people first and winning them, and along with them their following, to Christ. I realise now that this is a difficult process. The great De Nobili suggested that plan and himself made strenuous efforts to win over this superior community. He observed pollution and cleanliness like them. He observed their fasts and their vigils. He wore their clothes and their ornaments. He, as it were, stood on his head, practically all the time, in prayer to God to turn the hearts of these men. All this was of no use. The brahmins provided him with all the conveniences he required for doing as they did but sent him

away empty. We should learn a lesson from this. Let us not think that we are going to convince the brahmin and spread the religion of Christ. Let us take into our fold whatever population is moved by the living voice of Jesus. We cannot convince blasphemers and light-headed laughers. Let them laugh if they will. When the light dawns on them they too will come this way. Till then let us not waste on them effort which will be more fruitful elsewhere.

If this is the mistake that we have been making, the Mahomedans are making a different kind of mistake. We have to understand that we should avoid their error. That error is that they have not hesitated to use force to make converts. You may have heard that the Sultan who died very recently converted large groups to his religion in all the places which he conquered in the wars. But for the element of compulsion, one is almost inclined to say that what he did was a good thing. Though people feel some pain when forced to embrace another religion, it turns out well later, because Hinduism does not take back the people thus converted. The converts are thus forced to continue in the new religion. If you convert the head of a house you mostly get the rest of the household. One man who is

forced is unhappy while alive but his sons and his grandsons have no such pain and grow up zealous followers of the new religion. They are, in fact, even more loyal to the new religion than those who have grown in it for a thousand years. These are the reasons why one may think that conversion by force is almost desirable. But it must be admitted that the use of force is the procedure of an uncultured people. There is another defect in that process and that is that even one single man nursing a grievance that he has been forced to embrace the new religion can do great harm. The end of the Sultan is an illustration of this. Haider Ali pushed the King of this land into the corner and assumed the reins of administration. He did not hurt the religion of the people in loving his own. His son tried to spread his religion with more fervour than his father. You may say that he lost the kingship in consequence of this. I shall justify this statement by giving you an account of some things that occurred here. I have made enquiries and can vouch for the general truth of what I say.

You have no doubt heard that; even after the throne was usurped, the Hindu King continued to live in a small palace in this town. There was a brahmin woman in the service of the palace. She

had a young son. His name was Narasimha. In the year in which Tipu succeeded his father and openly assumed royal insignia, as his father had never done, his fervid love of his religion made its appearance in everything. In Sreerangapatam itself his men converted a number of helpless people. Tipu, it is said, liked this, but used to say for outward show that the subjects of the state should not be compelled in this matter. If some one brought a complaint of force having been used, he would, it is said, make a pretence of holding an enquiry and come to the conclusion that the change of religion had been voluntary, and say that there was nothing more to be done. The brahmin woman in the service of the palace, whom I have mentioned, was employed about the worship room. It was the business of her household to produce enough leaves of the basil plant for worship each day. One day in the first year of Tipu's reign, Narasimha's mother gave the boy something to eat in the morning and sent him for bringing the leaves. The boy left for the garden. It was rather later than usual. Those who had gone earlier had by that time returned to their homes. The boy was therefore alone in the garden picking the leaves. It would appear that some four rowdies of the king's guard

were standing on the bank of the river. They seem to have approached the boy and said a good word or two to him and told him that there was a lot of good basil further on and that he could pick it if he would go with them. The boy did not wish to go with them. In fact, he was afraid to go. But he dare not say 'no' and begin a quarrel immediately. So he decided to follow them some little distance and then run away. They took him with them and he could not escape. He was taken to some house farther away and was not able to come out till eight days later.

The mother was distressed and made a search all over the town. The boy was not to be found. She took a complaint to the palace. The servants of the palace also searched but could get no information. Finally, somebody whispered to them that they had heard the boy crying from some house. As he was the son of a servant-woman of the palace, the complaint was taken to Purniah. The man who is now prime minister is that same Purniah. It is not now possible to say what this man did in those days when such complaints came. The people in the town are greatly dissatisfied with him in this connection. When there was pressure on this behalf from the palace, the Sultan ordered that a

search be instituted for the boy. After some time his servants brought the young man to him. The four men who had caught the boy and the priest who had converted him asseverated before the Sultan that the youth had embraced his new religion of his own accord and that there was not the slightest force used in the case. The young man, however, abused all these men violently in the very presence of the Ruler and complained that they had forced him. When the enquiry was over, the Sultan expressed great displeasure that these men should have interfered with a subject of his state and told the youth that as he was not willing to be converted he might do as he wished.

Narasimha came to the palace and begged that he might be taken back to Hinduism. This is not possible in this religion. The priests said : " You have been deprived of the sacred thread for eight days. You have not performed the prescribed prayers all this time. You took food from *mlechcha* hands. We do not know what things you ate. Worse than everything you have been given a Mahomedan name. How can you be taken back into Hinduism ? " Only two people were anxious that the youth should be put through some ceremonies of purification and taken back and they were the young Hindu King and his mother. They

were, however, unable to influence their priests. In the end, therefore, the youth had no option but to stay on in the new faith. Narasimha was very sad and very angry with the brahmins who expounded the strict rules of their sect. He said: "God will punish those men who used force and changed my religion. But He will not let go you men who will not correct the harm they did. May your houses fall in ruins; and, if this is not to be because your decision is right, may your religion fall in ruins, for holding such a course right. Look on me as a Mussalman from today. May the King and his mother, who understood some at least of my pain, be happy and see good! But from this moment on I am a servant of the Sultan. I warn you not to come alone across my way anywhere. If you do I shall spit on your faces and you will lose caste and will not be able any longer to be brahmins. I shall pull off your sacred threads and see you have no religion left. Beware and keep away from me." So he shouted and raged and uttered words of imprecation and contempt and went away to the Sultan. There he made reverence to the Sultan's brother-in-law and said: "I am the brahmin Narasimha who lost caste eight days ago. My people have refused to take me back. I beg of you to give me some work

here." He got some work in the palace. He had been given the name of Mahomed Abbas at conversion. From now on he went about calling himself by this name.

Mahomed Abbas, in later years, came to be employed near the person of the Sultan. The violent intolerance that this man showed about the brahmins could not have been felt by any Mussalman who was such by birth. The Sultan and his ministers employed him in many important tasks of state. On accession to the throne, Tipu brought into vogue the policy of having, as far as possible, people of his own faith in important offices. These men did not know the language of the country. They had to rely upon servants who knew the language. In such cases it is not unusual for the thing that the master says and the thing that the servant writes being different. Mahomed Abbas was often serviceable in preventing this and became the trusted assistant of the men in authority, helpful when there was any difference in the instructions recorded. Many of the subordinate officers on this ground developed a dislike as well as fear for the man. Correspondingly, he established a reputation for reliability in the other quarters. Narasimha was a naturally intelligent man. These facts combined

made him one of the important servants around the throne in a few years. In the beginning Purniah did not think much of this fellow who was worming himself into favour in the court. Later, he came to realise that the youth was not to be ignored in this way and learnt to beware of him.

Some years passed. By removing Hindus who held high places and appointing men of his own faith in their stead, by not preventing with sufficient rigour the conversion of his own subjects to his faith by force, and by showing in a number of ways a preference for men of his religion and lukewarm feelings towards men of the other faith, the Sultan lost the love of his subjects. While he lived Haider Ali always said that the Hindu King was still ruler and that he, Haider, was only his servant. His son pushed the King from the throne and ascended it himself. Many Mussalmans who were loyal to their Hindu master were hurt by this procedure. The servants of the palace were not people to submit to this supersession of the royal house. Immediately Tipu ascended the throne, therefore, a movement started to bring him down from it and to restore to the old house the kingdom which had been usurped. The central figure in this movement was the widow of the

previous King and grandmother of the boy who is now ruler. The lady is alive. Her name is Lakshammanni. She is a born stateswoman. She saw from the circumstances of the day that there was no way of overthrowing the usurper but that of calling in the English. She, therefore, sent a number of agents to make secret negotiations with the English officers in Madras. What occurred in consequence is now history. For every bit that Thirumalarao, the agent of Mysore, did in Madras he received authority and guidance from Lakshammanni in Sreerangapatam. Communication over such a length of time on matters of such importance could not have been kept secret without the help of many trusted servants. For some time, indeed, no one knew that any negotiations were afoot. But at the end of two years some person on the side of the Sultan suspected intrigue and warned his master. Tipu became watchful and made arrangements to have an eye on the men who travelled in and out of the town. Communication thereafter became somewhat difficult.

It is stated that in this context the Maharani received help from a junior minister of the Sultan. The name of this man was Krishnarao. He was a brahmin of the Mahratta country. This is a

curious feature of the conditions here. The Sultan appointed Mussalmans to most of the important places but two of the ministers were still brahmins. I have never been able to understand how Tipu who showed such a dislike to the Hindus as a class still kept these men in authority so near him. It strikes me that these men did not act like Hindus. They did not actually give up their religion, but in return for the bread they got from their master they gave up their self-respect. If this were not the case how could these men put up so quietly with the persecution to which the Sultan and his men subjected the Hindu population? These ministers should have had the very limited ideal that it was for the Ruler to decide how the country should be ruled and for them to be loyal to him and assist him. From one point of view this is praiseworthy. From another it is very mean conduct. However that be, these men happened to be in very high positions in the administration. It would appear that in the plot for overthrowing Tipu and restoring the old house serious efforts were made to get the help of these ministers. Purniah would have nothing to do with any such plot. Indeed, when Tipu was dead and the question was whether the State should be given to Tipu's sons or to the previous royal house,

Purniah seems to have said that it should be given to Tipu's sons. When they asked him about the desirability of restoring it to the Hindu royal house he said that circumstances did not make this expedient. This shows the complete loyalty of this man. Now that the same Hindu royal house is in possession of the throne and this same man is prime minister and regent, you see the same devotion to his master in Purniah today. Though Purniah would have nothing to do with any plot for restoring the old king, it would appear that Krishnarao was less loyal to Tipu. A number of people who had reasons for being dissatisfied with the Sultan seem to have joined the plot along with Krishnarao. Among those who then joined it was Mahomed Abbas.

No one can now tell what share exactly Mahomed Abbas had in the plot and negotiations. He was a very intelligent fellow. He was a fervent adherent of his new faith. He was free to move close to the Sultan. Every one knew that he hated the brahmins. Mussalmans had, therefore, no reason to suspect him. For the reason that she had said kind words to him soon after his conversion, Mahomed Abbas had great respect for Laksham-manni. As a boy he had grown in the palace of the Hindu King. Something of the love which

had then grown in his heart; he retained for the old royal house. The Maharani saw this man once or twice and felt that he should be of great help in her plans. Within a year or two Abbas had, as the Maharani's agent, written a number of letters on her behalf, sent them with secret messengers to various places, received replies on her behalf and passed them on without arousing suspicion, and altogether done work that ten others might not have been able to do. He had only one object in doing all this and that was to remove from power the men who had changed his religion by force. That the Hindus to whom he had belonged should come into power was not the motive. These men were cruel of heart; they were not fit to rule; they had done him harm; he must wreak vengeance on them: this was his prime and final motive.

In one of these years Tipu had to go out with an army and in his absence Mahomed Abbas was a little careless. A letter addressed to the English officers in Madras fell into the hands of the other party. The writing of the letter was examined to find out the author and it was seen that this was Mahomed Abbas. The Sultan heard of the plot and came back and held the enquiry himself. Mahomed Abbas gave out nothing. He would not

say that he wrote the letter at any one's instance. He said that he was a traitor and was entirely responsible for having written it. From something told by someone else Tipu suspected that Krishnarao was involved in this affair. It is said that, in consequence, he got him killed secretly. Krishnarao's wife was a handsome woman. The Sultan took her into his harem. The enquiry established that Abbas was a traitor. It was ordered that he should be tied to the leg of an elephant and dragged all over the town. The condemned man reviled the Sultan and his religion to his heart's content. The religion into which he had been born was, he said, a cowardly religion. No one could be saved by a faith so effete. That religion should be destroyed. "By the punishment you have given me," he said, "you are doing me no harm. I was tired of this life. I shall die in peace. But, Sultan, listen to me. Your throne cannot stand. Everything necessary to pull it down is, by God's grace, accomplished." With a courage that astonished lookers-on he walked to the elephant which was to drag him over the streets of the town. He died undaunted. The people of this place sat in their houses and shut their doors to avoid seeing the gruesome scene of the man's punishment. The

few who, half in fear and half in curiosity, looked at it for a moment from the roof of a house or through a half-opened window, said that they saw on the face of the victim, not merely no signs of the pain he was feeling as he was being dragged on the ground, but also the smile of joy that a martyr might wear dying for his God and his faith. Mahomed Abbas's life-story ended that day.

The effort the man had made to pull down the Sultan, however, did not end there. The spark that he had nursed grew for three years longer and ended in the blaze in which Sreerangapatam fell to the English. In that fight the Sultan lost his life. After it the Hindu King was restored to the throne. He is ruling now. *It is not necessary for us to believe all that is stated about Narasimha.* People here in telling such a story never hesitate to add things from their imagination. But it is safe to believe that the core of it is fact and from that we have to gather this one lesson. If Tipu had not shown excessive preference for his religion and his men had not converted Mahomed Abbas and other people like him by force to their religion, it is possible that the Sultan would have been ruling today. Tipu did not realise this then. His people were in a hurry and as a result their religion has suffered loss.

We ought not to be in a hurry ; else, our religion will lose similarly.

This should not be understood, however, to mean that we should proceed leisurely and delay the spread of our faith. There are a number of defects in Hinduism. Mahomedanism may remove those defects in one way, but, in consequence of some peculiarities, that religion is unable to win the love of the masses at large. Christianity removes the defects of Hinduism and, being free from a certain severity which goes with Mahomedanism, wins the masses. The defects in Hinduism which I have in mind are mainly three. First, its doctrine that in this creation God is merely sporting. The sorrow and pain and suffering of life, in this view, are to God mere play. The God of the Hindu, unlike the God of the Christian, is not one to melt at the sight of pain. There is no harm in a happy land if its God is not a God of mercy. In a land like this land, full of poverty and suffering, what is to happen to the population if God is not a God of mercy — if He takes all life as play ? The people of this country badly need the God of Christianity. We have, I think, merely to describe the nature of God and they will abandon their faith and come to ours. The second defect in this religion is this.

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The brahmins who are the most important community in the religion are insolent and conceited and are entirely lacking in love for their faith. They believe that they are superior to all other people in creation. Aryavarttha is the holy land because in it you have caste and status and righteousness. The people of this land are better than people in any other land. There are four groups among them. The brahmin is best. The brahmin came from the face of God himself. The others came from the other limbs of God. The brahmin is god on earth. All others are lower than these gods. A soul has to long and strive in a number of lives before it can be born as a brahmin. The consequence of these men's behaving in this belief is deep disaffection within the religion. Those who wish to do as their fathers did put up with the insolence of the brahmins somehow. Everyone else says that he does not want this community. How many Hindus are there not who say that they do not want the brahmin? These superior men themselves strangely enough say: "Be with us if you will on our own terms. If not, you are welcome to go." And supposing that you do admit that these men are truly gods on earth, what is it that you gain in return? Nothing.

You have merely the satisfaction of admitting their superiority. Anything might happen to you: the brahmin does not care and does not come to your help. You go to them and say that someone has converted you to his religion and ask to be taken back: these men say stubbornly, no. This is clear from the story of Narasimha. Hinduism has a one-way valve. Any one may go out of it but no one can get into it: and lest any one should get into it the brahmins mount guard. The third defect in this religion is the mass of dubious things that practice has developed in its observances. A religion should strive for purity. It should strive to give up what is impure. In Hinduism on the contrary, cast your eye where you will, you see what is impure. The God of the Hindus cannot get on unless he has a wife. Several of their Gods have several wives. Of the chief incarnation of a major God of the religion, the main business was to play with women. Among sculptures in their temples you invariably find a number of foul and obscene figures, nude and in all kinds of postures. In the cars in which they take their gods out in procession you find carvings; the two last panels contain pictures which I would not like to describe. In the car in this town, for example:

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you wonder why, even if the man who made the car was shameless enough to carve the figures, these men should see it and also be shameless. I was at Mudukutore some years ago, for a car festival. At one corner of the fair was a small procession. They were making two figures play. The great procession was taking place in another part of the temple grounds. This one was a subsidiary show. Men are supposed to come for the main procession. There was, however, no dearth of people round this little one. And what was this show? Honestly, I cannot make up my mind to describe the mimetics of this procession. These reasons and many others have made one thing clear to my own mind. Hinduism is not a religion that can live. I am fully convinced that the salvation of this country lies in Christianity. I could detail my reasons for this conviction but that would prolong this letter greatly. As it is already long I have to close. The rest of what I should like to say I shall write in another letter.

I have all the conveniences I need here. I beg you to communicate news of me and my blessings to our following there. If you will be good enough to indite a gracious epistle some time when you are at leisure, I shall feel privileged

to read it and receive assurance of your Grace's
friendship which I value greatly.

I remain,
dear reverend Buoisney,
Your Grace's humble servant,
Dubois.

